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ABSTRACT

Ontario's Transition Years initiatives, designed to change schooling structures and processes and ease early adolescents' transition to high school, seem to place teachers in equally trying and traumatic transitions in their work and careers. Program components challenge teachers' sense of competence and effectiveness and threaten to consume exhaustive amounts of time and energy to reach a state that teachers may not consider worthwhile. In an effort to understand how change can benefit both teachers and students, this volume presents qualitative case studies of six secondary schools working to implement various components of the Transition Years initiatives. These cases get at restructuring realities that often differ among students, teachers, administrators, and parents. The study focuses on certain determinants of participants' existing practices and perspectives, including contexts and expectations, biography and previous experience, career goals and interests, and cultural membership. Findings show that the Transition Years initiatives involve much more than destreaming (untracking) and involve teachers in different learning points. The major changes occurred in the corridors and back rooms of case study schools. Teachers can cope with uncertain changes by responding collectively and concretely. Restructuring requires strong commitment, favorable work place conditions, and should involve teachers, students, and parents. (MLH)

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ED 371 474

Years of Transition: Times for Change

A Review and Analysis of Pilot Projects Investigating Issues in the Transition Years

Volume Three
The Realities of Restructuring: Case Studies of Transition

Principal Investigators
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Diane Gérin-Lajoie
Dennis Thiessen

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EA 025 919

Ministry of Education and Training
Ontario

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Overview of the French Language School Case Studies

Sud-Ouest Secondary School

L'école secondaire du Sud-Ouest is a small secondary school (159 students in September 1991), in a rural area of south-western Ontario. The school is situated in a small village not far from a small urban centre. The pilot project involved the secondary school and its three feeder schools. The main focus of the pilot was to reorganize the school structure in order to offer higher quality instruction to adolescent learners while respecting the realities of being the linguistic minority. The project sought to renew the francophone identity of the students by encouraging them to continue their schooling in a French-language secondary school.

The project sought to include all of the Transition Years initiatives proposed by the Ministry with concentration on destreaming the Français, English and Religious Studies programmes, facilitating the transition of Grades 7 and 8 students to Grade 9, and teacher in-service. The roles of the school board, the principal, the Transition Years resource person, teachers, parents and students are discussed. Finally, the project is analyzed in the light of Michael Fullan's theories on educational change.

Pagé Secondary School

L'école secondaire Pagé is situated in a regional urban centre in northern Ontario where Francophones make up about 30% of the population. Pagé offers programmes from Grade 7 to graduation to 515 students. The pilot project involved primarily the transfer of the Grades 7 and 8 programs from its elementary feeder school to the secondary school. This reorganization was an administrative decision taken at the school board level.

The goals of the pilot project were: 1. to enhance the students in this age group by placing them physically in a milieu which, on the levels of human and physical resources, is more like a secondary school yet modified to meet their specific needs; and 2. to facilitate the transition of students by accentuating the concept of family of schools through regular visits and exchanges and to use a team of teachers for Grades 7, 8 and 9. Implications for Transition Years are discussed under the following headings: a) the conflict between two teaching cultures; b) the difficulty of developing a culture specific to the Transition Years in schools and in the school system in general; c) the absence of a shared vision concerning the restructuring; d) the absence of a shared vision concerning the Transition Years; and, e) restructure the system or entrench the status quo.

Vue d'ensemble des études de cas des écoles de langue anglaise

Ce volume comprend une analyse détaillée de différentes expériences de refonte telles que les ont vécues principalement les enseignantes et enseignants et les élèves. On y trouve également six études de cas de projets pilotes, dont quatre ont eu lieu dans des écoles de langue anglaise et deux dans des écoles de langue française, et une analyse de la façon dont les parents percevaient les initiatives se rapportant aux années de transition et l'éducation de leurs propres enfants dans quatre écoles différentes. Les études de cas brossent un portrait qualitatif de certaines écoles, exposent les données recueillies au cours d'entrevues en profondeur avec les enseignantes et enseignants, les élèves et parfois les parents et les directions d'école, et témoignent d'observations faites en salle de classe.

L'école secondaire Allendale

L'école Allendale est une grande école secondaire située dans un centre urbain à forte population multiculturelle et multilingue. En septembre 1990, l'école a décloisonné les programmes de 9^e année et a commencé à intégrer des programmes en suivant une stratégie qui proposait de changer la structure et l'ambiance de l'école, les méthodes d'enseignement, le programme périscolaire et les services à l'élève. Elle visait aussi à établir de nouveaux liens avec la communauté et une nouvelle structure de leadership qui comprendrait la coordination de l'éducation intermédiaire, de l'équité et des programmes périscolaires.

L'école secondaire Lincoln

Cette nouvelle école, à proximité d'un grand centre métropolitain, a ouvert ses portes en septembre 1990 à des élèves de 9^e et 10^e année dont le statut socio-économique se situe dans la moyenne ou au-dessus de la moyenne. Selon son mandat, le directeur devait mettre en œuvre la politique et la philosophie inhérente aux années de transition. Le personnel enseignant a été choisi parmi un assez grand nombre de candidates et de candidats. Le grand nombre de candidatures est attribuable à l'occasion qui était offerte de participer à la création d'une nouvelle école et de mettre en œuvre une philosophie d'éducation axée sur l'élève.

La 9^e année est divisée en trois cohortes de quatre classes décloisonnées. Tous les élèves suivent un programme commun, divisé en cours de base – soit mathématiques, anglais, sciences sociales, etc. –, et en cours «d'exploration» – soit arts visuels, arts dramatiques, musique, etc.. L'expérience de l'école secondaire Lincoln aide à comprendre le changement que vise le projet sur les années de transition. C'est le décloisonnement de la 9^e année, le système de cohortes, l'évaluation des élèves et le programme de mentorat qui constituent la majeure partie des changements.

L'école secondaire Shoreline

L'école secondaire polyvalente Shoreline est située dans une ville de grandeur moyenne dans le nord de l'Ontario. Elle compte deux écoles pépinières, elles-mêmes situées dans des zones urbaines et rurales. Elle compte un nombre restreint mais significatif d'élèves autochtones. L'école vit une période de baisse d'effectifs en raison du parachèvement du système des écoles séparées. Le projet pilote était une initiative de l'école et ses deux composantes visaient les services à l'élève et le programme de base.

L'école Shoreline a axé son expérience sur des apprentissages dans les nombreux domaines visés par les années de transition, a reconnu le besoin de changer les méthodes d'enseignement et le rôle crucial du leadership et a modifié les services à l'élève.

L'école secondaire Briarwood
L'école Briarwood, qui a la réputation d'école «démunie», est située dans une communauté urbaine de la classe ouvrière du sud-ouest de la province. Sa clientèle est multi-ethnique; 40 pour 100 des élèves sont d'origine portugaise. Le projet pilote est une initiative commune de Briarwood et des écoles pépinières. Il s'agit d'un projet de refonte visant le regroupement des élèves, les attitudes et les points de vue des enseignantes et des enseignants, la journée scolaire, le milieu physique et culturel, la programmation ainsi que les attentes et les exigences du travail des élèves et du personnel enseignant. Les champs d'intérêt portaient sur l'organisation de l'école, la facilitation des transitions, l'orientation et l'enfance en difficulté, l'engagement de la communauté et la formation innovatrice en cours d'emploi. Les objectifs de l'école Briarwood étaient de promouvoir une programmation holistique centrée sur l'élève, de créer une ambiance plus ouverte aux élèves et plus accueillante, et d'encourager la collaboration parmi le personnel enseignant. Le décloisonnement de la 9^e année restait un objectif secondaire dans le contexte des changements.

La famille des écoles Briarwood a misé sur plusieurs éléments dans son approche du changement : elles ont mis l'accent sur la préparation au changement plutôt que sur sa mise en œuvre; elles ont essayé de préparer ces changements en misant sur la communauté scolaire; elles ont employé un modèle d'action-recherche au lieu d'une approche plus traditionnelle de mise en œuvre; elles ont investi du temps dans la conceptualisation et ont fait la planification par consensus; elles se sont entendues pour mettre les élèves, les programmes et le soutien aux élèves au centre de leur intérêt; et elles ont accordé de l'importance au besoin de changer les attitudes et la structure.

L'école secondaire du Sud-Ouest
Cette étude de cas est publiée en français.

L'école secondaire Pagé
Cette étude de cas est publiée en français.

Les parents et les années de transition

Ce chapitre présente les données sur les points de vue des parents concernant le passage des élèves à l'école secondaire en général, et les initiatives s'y rapportant. Les parents ont participé à des entrevues en groupe. Ils et elles étaient plus au courant du programme de leur enfant que des initiatives de l'école en général et ils savaient très peu de chose des changements survenus dans la province. Les parents étaient au courant des questions importantes telles le décloisonnement et le programme de base. C'est dans les écoles où les liens avec les parents en ce qui concerne l'évaluation des élèves étaient les plus forts que les parents étaient les mieux renseignés sur les projets pilotes des années de transition.

Conclusions : Réflexions sur les cas

1. Les initiatives portant sur les années de transition comprennent beaucoup plus que le décloisonnement.

2. Les initiatives se rapportant aux années de transition engagent les enseignantes et les enseignants à différents niveaux d'apprentissage.

3. Les changements majeurs observés dans les écoles ayant fait l'objet d'études ont permis d'améliorer le climat de collaboration entre les enseignants et enseignantes ainsi que leurs relations professionnelles.

4. C'est quand ils répondent collectivement et concrètement aux changements incertains qui semblent menacer leur identité et leurs possibilités de réussir que les enseignantes et enseignants s'en tirent le mieux.

5. À moins de prendre une part active au mouvement d'innovation, les élèves peuvent facilement s'accrocher au confort du passé. Ils parlent très fort de la refonte en privé, mais se taisent en public.

6. Pour que le processus de refonte ait du poids, il est important de le mettre en valeur et de tout faire pour matérialiser ses objectifs.

7. Les enseignantes et enseignants devraient travailler en collaboration pour que le changement qu'entraîne la refonte se poursuive à travers eux.

8. Les partenariats qui sont à la base de la refonte devraient inclure en plus des enseignantes et enseignants, les élèves et les parents.

9. La refonte exige plus que l'engagement à collaborer. Il faut créer des conditions de travail qui la rendent significative et possible.

1.

Changes and Transitions

by

Andy Hargreaves

Introduction

The Trials of Transition

The years of adolescence, or the Transition Years as they have come to be known in Ontario, can be a trying and even a traumatic time for young people. Physically adolescents are changing, psychologically they are changing, and in the middle of all this, they are usually required to change schools as well. Changing schools in early adolescence does not even mean moving between schools that are similar. The institutional transition of early adolescence is typically from small schools to big schools, personal environments to more impersonal ones, common classes to diversified courses, teachers who know you widely as a person, to teachers who know you more through your performance in their subject (Hargreaves and Earl, 1990; Task Force on Education of Young Adolescents, 1989; Measor and Woods, 1984; Ahola-Sidaway, 1988).

If what we call the *substance* of change in the Transition Years is centred directly on these trying transitions that early adolescents experience, the *process* through which change will be addressed and implemented places teachers in equally trying and traumatic transitions in their patterns of work and career. The components of the Transition Years initiatives threaten many teachers with abandoning what has come to seem familiar, practical and efficient. They threaten teachers' sense of competence and effectiveness; and they threaten to consume exhaustive amounts of time and energy in reaching a state teachers may not consider to be worthwhile anyway.

The paradox of the Transition Years initiatives in Ontario and elsewhere is that the more they change the structures and processes of schooling to ease the transition for students, the more these changes intensify the problems of transition for teachers – and thereby reduce the likelihood that these changes will be implemented effectively. At the same time, excessive efforts to avoid or minimize the problems of transition for teachers and to defend their existing interests may lead to unnecessary delays in realizing the benefits of better transition for students or indefensible reductions in the scale and size of these benefits. Reformers may want to assert that schools are ultimately there to benefit their students, not their teachers; and that students' interests should therefore come first. However, as Sarason (1990) and others (e.g., Barth, 1990) have argued, if schools are going to be good places for students to be, they must be good places for teachers to be also. Dissatisfied and demotivated teachers do not produce satisfied and successful students.

This is one of the most basic paradoxes of educational change. The paradox can be infuriating and can seem intractable, but need not be so. We will begin to glimpse this as we review the literature on different strategies of change in the next section. More concretely, we will see some examples of how change can benefit both students and teachers within the cases of transition portrayed in this volume.

This volume reports six qualitative case studies implementing various components of the Transition Years initiatives. Where quantitative surveys offer breadth of coverage, qualitative case studies promise depth of understanding about particular kinds of settings. These cases get at the realities of restructuring, in people's words and deeds. They show how those realities often differ among students, teachers, administrators and parents. They enable us to test and develop existing theories about change, yet their depth and sensitivity leave open the possibilities of surprise for people in the case study schools to voice perceptions and concerns that could not easily have been predicted beforehand. Case studies such as these give public voice to those who are normally excluded from policy debate – such as students. They also provide mirrors through which other people can reflect upon their own practice.

The case studies did not set out to test very specific, tightly formulated theories. But we did not begin with a clear conceptual sheet. We did approach our task with certain conceptual and theoretical starting points that framed our study. We outline these next before describing our research design in more detail.

Conceptual Framework

Constructions and Contexts

The perspective we take in analyzing the case studies is a broadly interpretive one. This perspective has roots and expressions in many particular intellectual traditions such as constructivist psychology (Kelly, 1955), social phenomenology (Van Manen, 1991) and symbolic interactionism (Blumer, 1969; Woods, 1983; Nias, 1989). Across these traditions, however, there are some common assumptions which have guided the project team in its investigations. These are:

- Individual constructions of reality differ. People see and experience things differently. People bring to apparently common situations different ways of seeing the world; different assumptions, different biographies and different interests. Seemingly common situations are therefore often construed in quite different ways. Students' interpretations are not identical to their teachers'. Older teachers approach change differently than younger ones. Teachers vary in how they respond to destreaming according to their subject allegiances and identities. This first principle of the interpretive perspective draws our attention to the fact that there is not one single reality of restructuring. There are many.

- In important respects, individual constructions of reality are not uniquely, idiosyncratically and infinitely variable. They form distinct patterns and groups. People with common backgrounds and careers tend to develop similar outlooks on the issues and problems they encounter. Similarly, people who routinely and repeatedly encounter similar pressures and problems in the workplace or elsewhere, tend to develop similar ways of perceiving them, predicting them and coping with them over time. In Howard Becker's terms, people develop *group perspectives* in response to situations which they experience and encounter in common (Becker et al., 1961). In response to the "problem" of destreaming, for instance, these group perspectives may be located in different subject traditions and communities, in different age cohorts of teachers, in teacher-groups who work in different kinds of communities (suburban and inner city), or in groups of teachers adhering to different ideological commitments and beliefs. One task of the interpretive perspective is to map these patterns of difference in outlook, interpretation and subsequent behaviour. For this reason, one focus of our case studies is upon the varied ways in which Transition Years initiatives are interpreted and implemented — between administrators, teachers, students and parents; between teachers of different subjects and commitments; and between people in different kind of schools.

- If people's individual constructions and interpretations are shaped by their purposes, pasts and personalities, they are also moulded by the contexts in which people live and work, and by the opportunities and constraints which those contexts present (McLaughlin, 1992). To understand the teacher

> certainly entails understanding the person the teacher is (Fullan and Hargreaves, 1991; Leithwood, 1992). But it also entails understanding the context in which teachers work along with the possibilities and limitations which that context presents for their work. This same principle applies to students as well who, we will see, wrestle with many aspects of transition — not just those of the program, or of teachers' work demands, but of maintaining acceptance and status among the peer group as well within the classrooms and corridors of school life.

The contexts in which teachers and students work are not just clusters of isolated, independent variables that happen to fall together in different ways, in different places. Rather, they are shaped by powerful social forces and historical traditions of the kind we described in Volume 1. Socially, historically and institutionally, contexts matter for teachers and their work. They drive the overall impulse for change, while shaping or even stunting the particular form it can take. The gravitational pull of historically embedded traditions of subjects and departments upon attempts to move toward more curriculum integration, for instance, cannot be understood without grasping the historical context in which secondary schooling and subject traditions have evolved (Goodson, 1988).

Equally, our selection of case study sites allows us to be sensitive to how the struggle for change develops in different kinds of schools and settings. Metaphorically, we are interested not just in the movement of the swarm of change overall, but also in the shifting positions of gnats within that swarm! The differing characteristics and conditions between sites in terms of such issues as school-size, leadership style, subject departments, nature of the community etc. are important here (McLaughlin, 1992:171-178).

Policy and Practice

Within our broad interpretive framework, a more specific starting point for the design of the case study research was a particular understanding of the relationship between educational policy and practice. In reality, policy and practice are inextricably intertwined. They exist in a dialectical relationship, each continually and reciprocally influencing the other. But when we take different starting points, we see different aspects of the process. If we approach the problem from only one of these starting points, we are in danger of seeing a distorted picture. A more comprehensive and balanced view is achieved by taking them into account simultaneously.

The usual approach is to begin with policy, and trace its effect upon practice. This *policy-into-practice* approach is a familiar one within the long tradition of policy implementation studies (Werner, 1982; Leithwood and Cousins, 1990). Within the context of this study, the policy-into-practice approach focuses on how Transition Years documents and related communications influence the meanings, actions and practices of administrators, teachers, students and parents within pilot project schools.

Within this perspective, we identified what were at the commencement of the Ontario Ministry funded pilot projects, the six key components of the Transition Years initiatives; namely, core curriculum; assessment; evaluation and reporting; student support services; community involvement; school organization and teacher inservice education.

We selected our six case study sites so that each Transition Years component would be addressed in at least one of the sites. Our interview schedules with teachers, students and in some cases, parents also elicited their responses to and interpretations of progress and implementation with regard to those Transition Years components that were a focus in their own pilot project settings. All this enabled us to see what happened to the policies, how they were interpreted and understood, how far teachers progressed in implementing them, what successes teachers experienced, what obstacles they encountered, and what impact the policies had upon students.

A second approach to investigating the relationship between policy and practice takes a quite different starting point. This is what we call a *practice-into-policy* study. As Cohen and Ball (1990:253) argue, "practice has a profound influence on policy".

> Teachers do not simply... alter... their practice in response to externally envisioned principles. Rather they apprehend and enact new instructional policies in light of inherited knowledge, belief and practice.
>
> (Cohen & Ball, 1990:253)

The same can be said of students. Adopting this approach directs us to look at the meanings, experiences and actions of teachers and students with regard to current practice, and the effect of all these on their interpretation and implementation of Transition Years policies.

In this perspective, it is the historically ingrained and culturally embedded weight of existing practice with its habits, motives, assumptions and traditions, that is seen to shape the fortunes of policy; not vice versa. One begins here not by understanding the policy then addressing sources of acceptance of or *resistance* to it, but by understanding the practice and the disconnected and extraneous relationship that policy is sometimes seen to have to it. Policy-into-practice studies address how and why teachers do or do not do things differently. Their interest is in the fortunes of the policy. Practice-into-policy studies address how and why teachers continue to do what they do, even in the face of new policies. Their interest is in the depth and dynamics of the practice. The two approaches are not competitive. They are complementary. But the second approach (practice-into-policy) does generate different kinds of research questions, from its policy-into-practice counterpart.

Specifically, we were initially interested in the following determinants of teachers', students' and sometimes parents' existing practices and perspectives and the place of Transition Years initiatives within them:

1. ***Contexts and Expectations***. What are the contexts and expectations that shape *students'* practices and perspectives? What perceptions do students have of schoolwork requirements including workload, coherence of the program, content coverage, assessment demands, teachers' expectations and grading practices? How do these influence their schoolwork practices; the ways they study and learn? In other words, what *coping strategies* (Hargreaves, 1978) do students adopt to deal with these contexts and expectations? Similarly, what expectations do parents have of schoolwork? How important are these perceived as being?

Is the implementation of Transition Years policies creating new contexts and expectations within the classroom? Are there new demands and expectations in terms of workload, coherence of the program, shrinkage or expansion of content to be covered, more open-ended or diffuse assessment demands, different patterns of working (e.g. independent or cooperative, etc.)? In what ways do these new demands and expectations mesh with previous, or existing ones? What is their relationship to students' current coping strategies? How do students interpret and deal with these changes?

What is students' experience of what Werner (1982) calls *policy support in use*, i.e., the way that policies concerning the management of change are actually carried out?

Students are rarely consulted about or involved in innovation (Rudduck, 1991; Fullan, 1991). Have students had Transition Years policies and their implementation explained to them? Are the new expectations and the rationale behind them clear? Have students been consulted about these changes? Have they had an opportunity to voice concerns and anxieties? Are students given experiential training in the new skills and work habits expected of them (e.g. cooperative learning, performance-based assessment) as a way of learning about the new expectations?

What are the contexts and expectations that shape *teachers'* practices and perspectives? What perceptions do teachers have of current demands on their work including assessment and accountability constraints, requirements for content coverage, available textbooks, materials and resources, class size, numbers of student contacts, parents' expectations, leadership expectations, student norms and expectations of 'reasonable ' work requirements, and the demands of multiple innovations? In other words, what coping strategies do teachers adopt to deal with these contexts and expectations? Do these *coping strategies* vary by type of teacher (e.g. subject or career stage)?

Is the implementation of Transition Years policies generating new demands and expectations for teachers in terms of workload, planning time, the need to develop new knowledge and skills, different subject or teaching assignments, the amount and time of content to be covered, more open-ended assessment strategies; requirements to meet, plan, and work with colleagues, and increased demands of multiple innovations? In what ways do these new demands and expectations mesh with previous and existing ones? How do they relate to teachers' current goals and purposes and to their existing coping strategies? How do teachers deal with these changes? Do different types of teachers reconcile them in different ways?

What is teachers' experience of *policy-support-in-use*? Have teachers had Transition Years policies and their implementation clearly explained to them? Are they aware of and do they agree about 'the problem' for which the new policies are an intended solution? Is the pace of change appropriate? Have teachers been consulted about the changes? Have they had an opportunity to voice concerns and anxieties? Have teachers been directly involved in the development of the changes? Have teachers received inservice training in the new skills and work habits expected of them? Has this training been 'one-shot' or continuous? Has it been grounded in practice and supported by colleagues?

2. ***Biography and Previous Experience.*** What is students' previous experience of teaching, learning and schoolwork within and before the Transition Years and how has that influenced their present perspectives and practices? What influence have their families and friends had on their perspectives about school? How do these things influence their perceptions of present and emerging demands and expectations regarding schoolwork, and the coping strategies they develop in response to them?

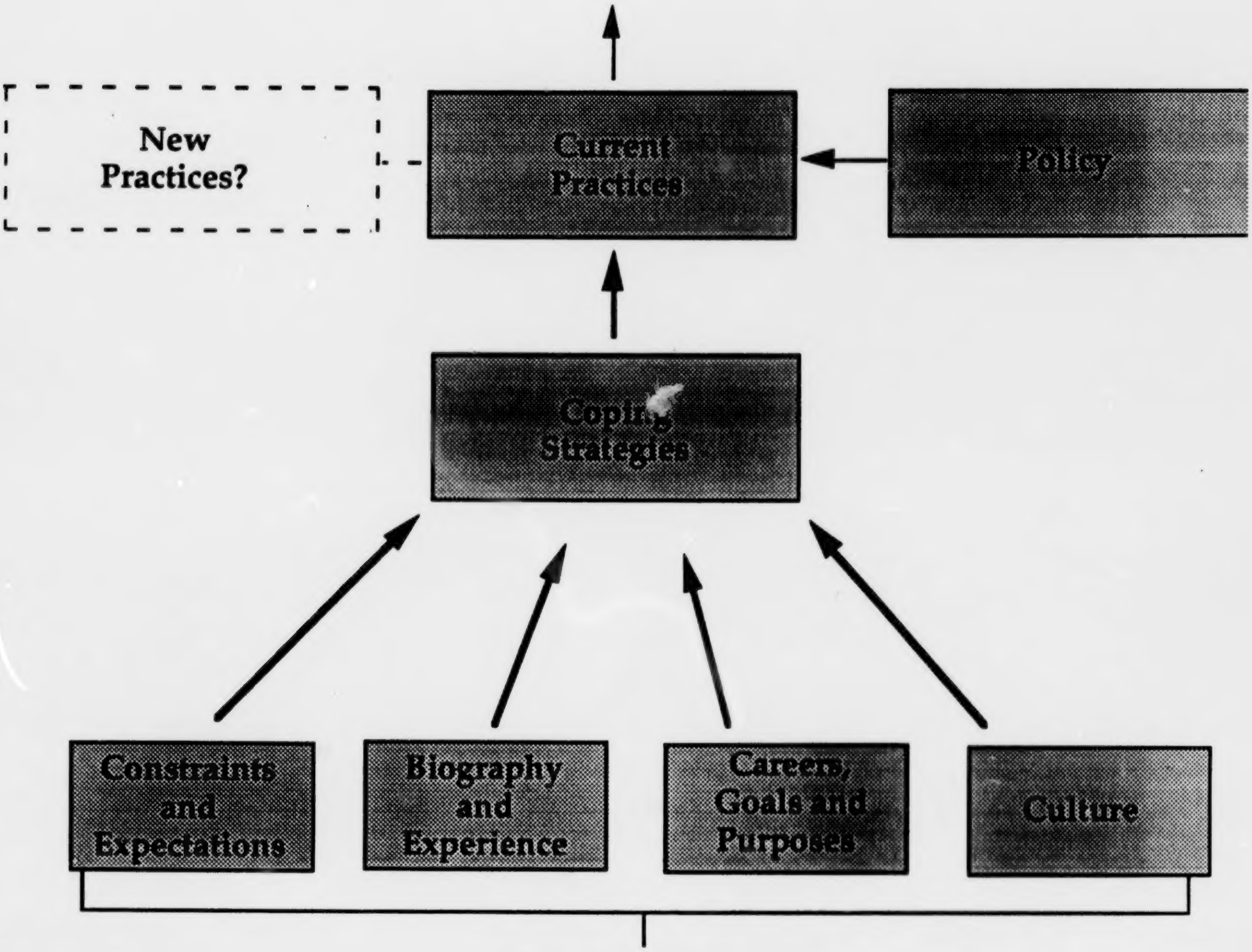
What are teachers' biographies and previous experiences in teaching in terms of the particular subject community of which they are and have been members; the panels, divisions, age-levels and levels of difficulty they have taught; the qualifications they have acquired and inservice programs in which they have participated; their involvement in and experience of previous innovations; and their experience of planning and teaching with colleagues. How have these things influenced their present perspectives and practices?

3. *Career Goals and Interests.* By 'career', we do not mean it in the conventional, occupational sense of promotion through a stepped hierarchy. Rather, 'career', as we use it, describes and delineates the life trajectory and moving perspective of an individual over time (Becker, 1953). In this respect, students have careers just as much as teachers do. However, the thrust of our inquiry here is with the careers of teachers.

What relationship do teachers' careers have to their existing practices and perspectives and to their response to Transition Years initiatives? Which teachers see advantages to involvement in innovation in terms of opportunities for career advancement? What are the perspectives and practices of teachers in different career stages, and how does this affect their response to the Transition Years initiative? How, for example do mid-to-late career teachers respond to the initiative? Are there teachers who are 'disenchanted' (Huberman, 1992) who have had their careers 'spoilt' (Riseborough, 1981) by blocked promotion and exclusion from past innovations and who now resist change? Are there teachers who are more confident and 'serene' (Huberman, 1992) about their accumulated expertise, but skeptical about getting involved in wholesale change because of negative experiences with past innovations or unwillingness to jettison what they already value? What strategies are being used to accommodate the concerns of teachers at different career stages in terms of such things as the pacing of change, flexibility in implementing change, and involvement in change?

Figure 1

Conceptual Framework for Practice-into-Policy Approach


New Practices?
Current Practices
Policy
Coping Strategies
Constraints and Expectations
Biography and Experience
Careers, Goals and Purposes
Culture

Student and Teachers

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4. Cultural Membership. What different peer cultures exist among Transition Years students? What are the norms, values and beliefs of these different cultures? What impact do these cultures have on students' approach to learning and achievement? What impact do they have on students' responses to Transition Years initiatives? To what extent are these cultures created and sustained by the school itself? To what extent are student cultures actively involved in Transition Year initiatives (e.g. by using Grade 10 students as guides and helpers for incoming Grade 9s).

What are the major *cultures of teaching* in the Transition Years? How do these different cultures dispose teachers to respond to Transition years initiatives? Does the general school culture support teacher isolation or teacher collaboration (Little, 1984; 1990). What evidence is there of collaborative planning, team teaching, shared decision-making, goal-setting, peer coaching and other kinds of joint work among teachers? Do teachers work together as a whole school, or within smaller and separate city states that we have come to know as subject departments (Hargreaves & Macmillan, 1992)? In what ways and to what extent does the existing culture promote continuous growth, improvement and risk taking (Rosenholtz, 1989)? How can cultures that promote these things be created? Are Transition Years initiatives themselves enhancing or inhibiting the development of such supportive cultures? What kind of teacher culture is most supportive of responsiveness to change and effectiveness in teacher inservice strategies? In the case of the French-language schools, how is the cultural identity of the linguistic minority addressed and how is it translated into Transition Years initiatives? To what extent have schools involved with the Transition Years been able to promote collaborative teacher cultures that support continuous growth, improvement and risk-taking?

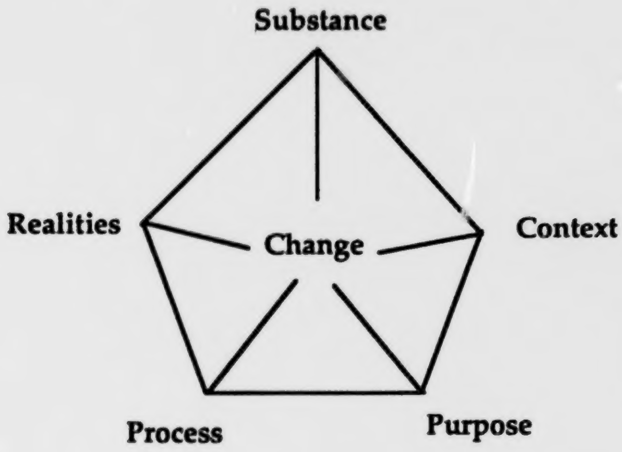
We set out to explore the effects on teachers and students of context and expectations, biography, cultures and careers by inquiring into issues that penetrate deeply beneath the specific impact of Transition Years initiatives themselves. With regard to teachers, for instance, we inquired into their professional backgrounds, their previous experiences and the wider dimensions of their working lives, to get a sense of what kinds of teachers they were and how they came to be that way. We wanted to understand the impact of Transition Years initiatives not on teachers in the abstract, but on real teachers, with real interests, real commitments and real lives; teachers whom we had come to understand in considerable depth.

Dimensions of Change

Restructuring involves change. This may be good change or bad change but it is change all the same. Change is neither a single nor simple phenomenon, however. It has many facets.

In addition to our understandings of the complex and double-sided relationship between policy and practice, we therefore also approached our case study investigations by using a template which depicted and helped us trace different dimensions of educational change within the pilot project sites. As we developed and refined this template during the course of our analysis, we came to see it as being delineated by five key aspects of educational change.

Figure 2: Dimensions of Change



1. *Change Substance*

The substance of change is what we described in Volume 2 as first order change. It is change contained within particular areas of practice such as curriculum, assessment and school organization. The criteria for the pilot projects outlined six components of change substance. Each pilot project site had to address at least two components in order to qualify for funding. The components were:

- Core Curriculum
- Assessment, Evaluation and Reporting of Student Achievement
- Student Support Services
- Community Involvement
- School Organization
- Teacher Inservice Education

Much of our case study analysis concentrates on issues of change substance. It identifies the Transition Years components that were addressed in each site. It looks at how these components were interpreted and implemented in practice. It documents how students, teachers and sometimes parents perceived the nature, benefits and problems concerning these components in their schools. And in some instances, such as the teaching of destreamed classes, descriptions are offered of what these components looked like in action.

2. *Change Context*

Change does not takes place in a vacuum. It has origins and antecedents. Changes arise in part from the actions of particular individuals in the policy domain. More generally, though, they arise from the accumulated actions of many individuals within the society and its historical development, actions that form social, political and economic patterns. There are forces which drive change; that propel it, move it and shape it in particular ways (Hargreaves, 1993; Fullan, forthcoming).

In Volume 1, we described the change forces which appear to be driving the move towards educational restructuring not just within Ontario, or even Canada, but across many parts of the globe. We looked at historical developments and shifts in educational policy within Ontario and concluded that existing solutions to the *continuing problems* of dropout and disengagement in secondary school had become exhausted because they did not address the fundamental form and fabric of secondary education which had been established for different purposes in a different time. We went on to describe how structures of schooling geared to the batch-production era of heavy mechanical industry were ill-suited to a postindustrial world characterized by global changes in patterns of production, communication and information. This contemporary context, with its qualities of economic and occupational flexibility, technological sophistication and complexity, cultural diversity, scientific uncertainty and organizational fluidity is not well served by existing structures of schooling. This, we argued, is the *contemporary problem* which schools face, and a source of many of the demands and pressures for them to restructure how they do business to meet the rapidly changing needs of the postindustrial world.

3. *Change Purpose*

Change is not neutral. It is not just a technical process to be managed and manipulated in more or less humane ways. Changes embody purposes. There are good changes and bad changes; changes with clear purposes and changes with vague ones, changes that are simple and straightforward, and changes that are complex and wide-ranging. The task of teaching is not just a technical act. It is loaded with moral purpose (Tom, 1987; Fullan and Hargreaves, 1991; Goodlad, 1990). Not all teachers' purposes are the same, but with greater or lesser degrees of explicitness, purpose is always central to their work.

Changes can further the interests and purposes of some teachers, but can also threaten and undermine the purposes of others. In England, Nias (1990) has shown how the detailed pressures and demands of the National Curriculum have left many teachers with a sense of loss or *bereavement*, as they feel they no longer have time or opportunity to care for their students in the ways they wish. Such erosions of teacher purpose can have serious consequences for morale, motivation and efficacy.

Because teachers' purposes are not all the same, narrowly defined changes can alienate many teachers whose own values and commitments are discrepant from those enshrined in policy. Changes defined more broadly can be more inclusive of many teachers' purposes but then run the risk of vagueness. Unclear changes can present diffuse senses of threat to all teachers as it seems clear their practice will have to change but not in ways or for reasons that can be clearly defined and defended.

Defining and defending purposes is not just an issue for policy-makers. It matters for teachers as well. Schools and teachers who have developed their purposes clearly and collectively, and who revisit them on a continuing basis, appear to engage with (though not always agree with) change more readily than schools where teachers' purposes are individualized or inchoate (Hargreaves, et al., 1992).

Through the case studies, we will explore people's purposes in pilot project schools along with their perceptions of the purposes embodied within and encapsulated by the Transition Years initiatives. Our data will reveal varied and often vocal responses to the perceived purposes of some of the initiatives, especially where teachers see themselves and their schools as culturally, geographically, or ideologically distant from political preoccupations centred in Toronto.

4. *Change Process*

How will teachers and others actually respond to Transition Years changes? How do teachers change — at this moment or any other? What makes teachers change in the face of change, and what makes them dig in their heels and resist? Questions such as these concern what is commonly referred to as the *change process*: the practices and procedures, the rules and relationships, the sociological and psychological mechanisms which shape the destiny of any change, whatever its content, and which lead it to prosper or falter.

Compared to the rather meagre research on the context, substance and purpose of educational change, there is now a rich store of literature, research and practical understanding on the *change process*. In the field of school improvement, in particular, which we reviewed in Volume 1, many maxims have been gleaned from this research and applied as a result of it. These include the observations that change is a process not an event (Fullan, 1991); that collectively, shared visions are more effective and energizing than personally proselytized ones (Barth, 1990); that it is better to think big, but start small (Fullan, 1988); that evolutionary planning works better than linear planning (Louis and Miles, 1990); that policy cannot mandate what matters (McLaughlin, 1992); that implementation strategies which integrate *bottom-up* strategies with *top-down* ones are more effective than *top-down* or *bottom-up* ones alone (Hopkins, 1991); and that conflict is a necessary part of change (Lieberman, et al., 1991). While there is sometimes a tendency to overstate these principles and to oversell them as manipulatable *rules* of change, most of them rest on the fundamentally sound understanding that teachers, more than any others, are the key to educational change (Fullan and Hargreaves, 1991).

Teachers are not the only ones to be affected by the change process. Restructuring and reform also impact on students, as they are meant to. Change can be a challenge for students as well as teachers. Their involvement in change is important, but often overlooked (Rudduck, 1991).

A major preoccupation of the case studies is with the meaning, dynamics and consequences of the change process for teachers, students and in some instances, parents as well. Vision, leadership, collaboration, conflict, timing, pacing, scope, complexity, planning and involvement are among the many themes we address — though with different emphases in each particular case. Many rational and reasonable changes have foundered because of their neglect or oversight of the change process. Our case studies explore this change process through the candid testimonies of those who are experiencing it.

5. *Change Realities*

Most studies of change, improvement or restructuring record people's perceptions of change; their accounts of what it is they are doing and experiencing. This is true of studies using surveys. It is also true of those which exclusively rely upon interviews. We have made extensive use of such data throughout our project, but within case studies, we have at points tried to go deeper than this. We have gone into classrooms and observed what teachers and students do there under the name of restructuring. The realities of restructuring are to be found in many places, but it is in the classroom, where learning takes place, that the most important realities are ultimately to be found (Lieberman & Miller, 1984). We observed these realities and have drawn upon them in our interviews with teachers and students to make them more concrete, more practical and less entwined in generalities.

Documenting the realities of change and restructuring is no easy task, however. The same classroom or lesson can seem very different depending on whether you look upon it as a teacher or as a student. Chapter 2 presents a striking illustration of this. There are many realities of change and restructuring, and many voices through which these realities are expressed. In many studies, the voices that tend to get reported are the voices of principals, senior teachers or committed innovators. These are the voices of the powerful; voices transmitted from the top. Case studies of the kind reported here enable many voices to be articulated and heard: the voices of students and parents as well as those of teachers; the voices of outsiders and skeptics as well as the voices of insiders who are committed; dissident voices as well as accepting ones. Research of this kind creates a forum in which the voices of those not usually represented in formal policy debate can be given a hearing, and give cause for reflection among those who have the power to act.

Summary: Changes and Transitions

The Transition Years initiatives entail not one transition, but many. Students are in transition between childhood and adolescence, elementary and secondary school and, as restructuring begins to affect them, between forms of schooling that are familiar, and other ones that are less so. Teachers are in transition as they struggle to make sense of and adapt to the many changes directly and indirectly affecting their working lives. Schools are already in transition as they deal with increasingly diverse student populations, changing family structures, public pressures to expand their role, and amid all this, continuing, indeed escalating demands for higher quality education. And the world surrounding schooling, the world of the complex, global information society, is also in transition as economies are restructured, cultures become more diverse, technology increases in complexity, and the geopolitical map is continually redrawn.

The transitions which schools are now facing are multiple and monumental. These case studies look at how pilot project schools are responding to these multiple transitions, in multiple ways

The Case for Case Study

This volume documents six case studies of Ontario Transition Years Pilot Projects undergoing change or restructuring. These case studies are preceded by an illustrative analysis of the different realities of restructuring as they are experienced by teachers and students, and are followed by an analysis of parents' perceptions of Transitions Years' initiatives and their own children's education in four different schools. Our analysis here is built around qualitative portrayals of particular schools, where data have been collected from intensive interviews with teachers, students and sometimes parents, and from observations of classroom life. What promise does this case study approach offer? What are its possibilities and limitations? What can we uniquely learn from it?

It's important first to be clear about what case studies are *not*: what they cannot reasonably promise to deliver.

- First, results from small numbers of case study schools do not reasonably apply to large numbers of other schools. The cases may not be typical of other schools. Case studies, therefore, tend to be weak on straight *generalizability* to much larger populations. Qualitative studies using survey data can establish stronger claims to generalizability across broad samples – indicating things like overall patterns of use, varied levels of adoption and so on. This is one of the reasons for including a survey component in the overall study design. The role of case studies, therefore, is *not* to provide grounds for statistical generalizability.

- Second, and by contrast, the purpose of case studies is not to provide interesting, descriptive "pictures" for allegedly "harder" quantitative data. As we argued in Volume 1, quantitative and qualitative research are not better or worse, "harder" or "softer" forms of research. They each have criteria of rigour to meet. They are equally robust as research tools, but they make their contributions to knowledge and understanding in different ways. The methods are complementary. Neither is superior to the other.

What is it that qualitative case studies can uniquely offer, then? What contributions do they make to understanding the interpretations and implementation of the Ontario Transition Years Pilot Projects?

- First, though weak on statistical *generalizability* (where the results are demonstrably typical of many other settings), case studies are strong on *validity*. They do well on what is called *descriptive validity* (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1985), because the opportunity to explore what people say and do in considerable depth means that you are measuring and describing what you are supposed to be measuring and describing. It is harder to meet this criteria in a survey context. People may fill in surveys too quickly, give researchers what they think researchers want to hear, or provide answers to questions that are not particularly important to them but for which a response is required. One chance discovery in one of our case study schools that the teachers had responded to the survey component of our study by getting together and filling it out as a group in the staffroom, shows the problems with validity that can be encountered in quantitative survey designs.

- Second, case studies reveal how different influences (e.g., leadership, school culture curriculum integration, school size), interact within real settings (Woods, 1985). They show how different patterns play themselves out in real schools.

- Third, while qualitative case studies can certainly be used to *test* existing theories and knowledge bases (Glaser and Strauss, 1970), they also have the potential to surprise researchers with issues and insight that are not easily predicted, but immensely important to the participants concerned. They are driven by the insights of people in practice, as well as the prior purposes of those in policy and research. We have, for instance, used our cases to test some existing theories of change process, but our close familiarity with the cases has also enabled us to generate new insights as students' and teachers' experiences and concerns have been impressed upon us.

- Fourth, case studies enable researchers to be responsive to the settings they are studying (Merriam, 1988). Leads can be followed up. Claims about what is happening can be cross-referenced with observations of the same events. Interviewees can be probed, clarifications can be sought, statements can be challenged. Evidence need never be taken on face value. Researchers can go deeper, on the spot.

- Fifth, if case study samples are selected with great care, at least tentative claims to generalizability can be made (though usually less strong than those embedded in survey research design). Here, when cases are selected, it is important to know what they are cases *of*. Of course, the surprise factor of qualitative research always means that chosen cases can turn out to be cases of things that were never foreseen. But selecting cases for specific reasons, and not just randomly or opportunistically, does enable one to sample directly different types of settings in very great depth and with possible applications to other settings like them (e.g., new schools, small schools, "lighthouse" schools, etc.).

- Sixth, case studies offer mirrors for our own practice. In the context of this project, they provide practical, meaningful, accessible accounts of change and implementation in a range of real settings. In this sense, we ask our readers to view our collection of cases as a hall of mirrors in which they might see important aspects of themselves. Some cases will be not at all like our readers' schools and will reflect back to them distorted images of themselves as a result – accurate in certain places perhaps, but exaggerated or unrepresentative in most others. Given the diverse ways in which we have deliberately set out to compose our sample, though, we would hope that a great many readers will find at least one case that is very much like their own school and which may generate reassurance, reflection or both as a consequence. We have endeavoured to undertake validity checks with many of our project participants and across members of our own research team. But one of the most important validity checks of all is the reader's own sense of familiarity, be this comforting or discomforting, with one or more of the cases presented here and their applicability to his or her own *setting*.

Case Study Sample

Effective case study work, we have seen, depends, in part, on considered selection of the cases themselves. Six school sites were selected as cases of Transition Years pilot projects. This sample was wide enough to allow exploration of Transition Years implementation across different localities. The sample was small enough, however, to be practically manageable, given the depth and detail of investigation in each case on the one hand, and what could be achieved within the project's budget and timescale, on the other.

The selected schools cover a broad geographical spread with two in the vicinity of Toronto, two in northern Ontario and two in southwestern Ontario. Eastern Ontario was the only major region not to be included. This was because of project budget limitations.

The schools are located in settings from small provincial towns to large metropolitan districts. They cater to students from a wide range of socioeconomic backgrounds, and a variety of ethnic groups, including schools with strong representation of students from native communities. English language and French language schools from both public and separate school boards were included. There are small schools and relatively large schools, relatively new schools and long established ones.

Taken together, the cases selected embrace all Transition Years components outlined in Ontario Ministry policy documents. The school sites also vary between ones that focus only on a very small number of components, to those which address several components simultaneously. This has afforded excellent opportunities to learn about the development and impact of combinations of changes. From this, we have learned a good deal not only about Transition Years components in isolation, but also about the patterns, the scope and the process of change when components are addressed together in different ways.

While the size and scope of the sample is necessarily affected by budget and travel restrictions and other practical limitations, we are nonetheless confident that in its geographical spread, in the range of students and communities served, in the variety of school types, and in the coverage of all Transition Years' components across the schools, the selection of sites offers excellent opportunities to describe and analyze Transition Years practices (be they successful or less successful) in a range of settings, in ways that will be helpful to others beginning to make changes in this vital area of educational improvement.

Case Study Sites

Particularly for readers whose interest or own experience is in particular kinds of sites (e.g., new schools, northern schools), very brief summaries of each case study school are offered here, as a guide to subsequent reading. For reasons of confidentiality, all names of the schools are pseudonyms.

Allendale Secondary School

Allendale School is a large secondary school situated in a densely populated, multicultural, multilingual, urban setting. Its student population represents over sixty countries and language groups and seventy percent are not Canadian born. One third were born where English or French is not the first language, approximately one quarter were born in the Caribbean and one quarter were born in Canada. It provides opportunities for students in both academic and technological areas. The school is part of a large urban school board that prides itself on being at the forefront of education as it relates to the working and learning environments of teachers and students and to concern for gender, racial and economic issues. Allendale has been experiencing problems in student retention, in student achievement results, in student attendance and feeling a pressing need to provide a safe, secure environment for students. In the 1989-1990 year, a Quality Assurance Review was conducted to determine how to address these concerns and based on the recommendations, the administration of the school put forward a strategic plan for a changed school structure, school environment, instructional methods, co-instructional program, advocacy and support services, new links with the community and a new leadership structure which included co-ordinators of intermediate education, equity and co-instructional programs. Within this context, funding was obtained for a Transition Years initiative.

Lincoln Secondary School

Lincoln Secondary School is in a community on the fringe of a large metropolitan area. It sits amid extensive areas of new middle to high-middle income housing developments. Because the school's students come mainly from this local area, few are from lower socioeconomic status families.

Lincoln Secondary is a new school founded as an experiment to interpret and implement some of the guidelines of "The Transition Years' (Grades 7-9)". At the heart of Lincoln's Transition Years project, and indeed at the heart of Lincoln's establishment itself is the creation of a reorganized structure for the Grade 9 year. Specifically, at the centre of the experiment is a destreamed cohort system for the first year of secondary school (Grade 9), designed to ease the transition from the elementary to the secondary level. An alternative system of student evaluation is also central to the pilot project at Lincoln.

Shoreline Secondary School

Shoreline Secondary School is an urban composite high school in a medium-sized city in northern Ontario. It represents several diverse groups of teachers and students within the province: its enrolment includes a large number of Native students; its Transition Years Pilot Project was school-generated; the teaching population is stable in an area of declining enrolment; and it includes both urban and feeder schools.

Founded in 1928, the school has a lengthy history of involvement with innovation, including offering night school programs for adults, pioneering models for semestering, developing culturally sensitive programs to meet the needs of its multicultural students, and creating flexible scheduling that allows students to take courses at neighbouring high schools.

The Transition Years' components upon which Shoreline Secondary School focused were student services and core curriculum. With respect to core curriculum, the concentration was on one-to-one communication between a few individual teachers who worked collaboratively across panels. The student services component, was much broader in scope and included not only high school students, but also students from Grade 7 and 8 in Shoreline's three major feeder schools.

Briarwood Family of Schools

Briarwood Secondary School sits atop a hill overlooking the urban, predominantly working class community from which it draws most of its 930 or so students. Built in 1966 as an elementary school, Briarwood became a secondary school in 1984. To accommodate this change as well as a rapid population growth in the community, 17 portable classrooms were added to the existing schools. Adjacent is an elementary "feeder" school, one of six elementary schools comprising the Briarwood "family". The "family of schools" concept was adopted by the school board to facilitate stronger links between the elementary and secondary panels. Briarwood is one of five families in the system.

The student population is ethnically diverse with a 40% predominance of Portuguese-Canadians, many being first generation Canadians.

The economic recession and recent political changes affecting the automotive industry have caused a high incidence of job loss in the community; societal conditions and pressures are reflected among the student population. The dropout rate is high; school violence and crime are on the rise; and concern over racism is growing. Sensitivity to and concern for the student population, a strong belief in social justice and equal opportunity, and serious doubts about how well the current system of education is serving the students prompted the school and school board administration to focus on the Transition Years as an entry point to a reconceptualization of the structure and curriculum of the school system.

École secondaire du Sud-Ouest

École secondaire du Sud-Ouest is a French language secondary school located in a rural area of southwestern Ontario, where the assimilation rate to anglophone population is the highest in the province. Students attending this school come from several small communities and from three feeder schools. The school is small with a student population of 159 during the 1991-1992 academic year. There are 16 teachers on staff, and several of them teach also in the three feeder schools. All but one of the teachers are francophones. They were either born in the region or they have come from Québec or from other parts of Ontario. This staff is fairly young, the majority with less than five years teaching experience.

The pilot project was also carried out in the three feeder schools. It addresses several of the Ministry of Education and Training's pilot project components (core curriculum, school organization, student assessment, community involvement, career education, gender equity, facilitating transitions, innovative in-service, remediation and enrichment, and finally, guidance and special education). The aim of the project was to improve the overall quality of education for the students, respecting them as individuals and taking into account the reality of their adolescent years and their position in a minority context. The project focused also on renewing interest in "le fait français" and in encouraging elementary students to pursue their education in French at the secondary level.

École Pagé

The French language school, École secondaire Pagé, with a student population of 515, is located in an urban area of northern Ontario, where 30% of the population is francophone. The school has 47 teachers. Three teachers work at the elementary level. Thirteen teachers are involved in teaching Grade 7, 8 and secondary level students. The rest of the teaching staff work at the secondary level only.

The pilot project in the school was concerned with two of the components defined by the Ministry of Education and Training for the Transition Years Pilot Projects – school organization and facilitating transitions. The project involved Grades 7 and 8, and, to a lesser extent, Grade 9 students. It consisted of transferring Grade 7 and 8 from am elementary feeder school to a secondary school. The transfer took place in September, 1990 and affected 80 students. The intent of the project was to provide the students with an opportunity to experience the secondary school environment, taking into account the specific needs of this age group. At the same time, it helped to solve a physical space problem for the board, resulting from an increasing number of students enrolling at the elementary school. At the Grade 9 level, it was decided that math and français would change from semestered to full year courses, in order to facilitate the transition from

Grade 8 to Grade 9. The project efforts have focused mainly on the transfer and reorganization of Grades 7 and 8.

Transition Years Components

Each case study site focused on particular components of the Transition Years' initiatives. Schools were required to focus on at least two components as a condition of pilot project finding. Many schools focused on more. For readers who are interested in particular Transition Years components, and want to turn to cases which deal with these components, Figure 1 lists the components which each of our case study schools addressed. These are not necessarily the ones which formed part of their formal proposals for funding, but are ones which they emphasized in practice. The components identified are the ones initially listed as criteria for the pilot projects, with the addition of "Facilitating Transitions" which was one of four components later added to the Ministry's list and also emphasized by schools themselves.

Figure 1
Transition Years Components Emphasized
in each Case Study Site

Transition Years Components	SCHOOLS					
	Allendale Secondary School	Briarwood Family of Schools	École secondaire Pagé	École secondaire du Sud-Quest	Lincoln Secondary School	Shoreline Secondary School
Student Assessment	○			○	○	
Teacher In-Service		○		○		
Student Support Services		○		○	○	○
School Org./ Destreaming	○	○	○	○	○	
Core Curriculum	○			○		○
Facilitating Transitions	○	○	○	○		
School Community Relations		○		○		

Case Study Methods

The particular details of data collection necessarily vary from school to school according to the nature of the setting. For instance, while much of our focus has been upon Grade 9, where schools have made explicit attempts forge links between Grade 8 and Grade 9, we have collected data from feeder schools also. These details are reported in each case study chapter. Despite the differences of detail, though, our data collection procedures have much in common across the cases.

- The most intensive period of data collection was undertaken at some point between February - March 1992, although additional data were collected and follow-up interviews were conducted in all our cases at other points as well

- In each school, two or more researchers worked together for an intensive period of 1-2 weeks. We opted to develop a detailed snapshot of each school at one particular point in its development and during the months preceding that, rather than construct a longer-term, longitudinal portrait of a necessarily sketchier nature. The simultaneous presence of research teams in each school made it possible to conduct effective interviews with focus groups of teachers or students, and also provided an extremely valuable source of validity checks during collection and analysis of the data.

- All cases involved interviews with school administrators (principals) and occasionally other administrators as well. They were interviewed about the nature and progress of the pilot projects, and also about their own perspectives, biographies and careers more generally. This enabled us to explore both the *policy-into-practice* and *practice-into-policy* aspects of Transition Years implementation.

- Similarly all cases involved data collection from teachers — approximately 8-12 in each school, the sample usually being drawn from those who were directly involved in Grade 9, if Grade 9 was the project focus, or from Grades 7 and 8 as well where appropriate. Data collection from teachers included:

  - observations of teachers' days including follow-up interviews concerning issues arising from that day as seen by the teachers and researchers respectively;

  - individual interviews with teachers about progress in implementing the substance of change in the Transition Years' components, about their perceptions of the *purpose* of the changes, about their experiences of the change *process*, and about their wider biographies, careers and commitments which informed their perspectives on these issues. In some cases, these interviews were grounded in prior observations of the teachers' day to provide a concrete focus, as mentioned previously;

  - focus group interviews with groups of approximately four teachers in each case, to develop discussion and analysis of issues emerging in the individual interviews, and of initial impressions and analyses arising from them.

- All cases also involved data collection from a number of Grade 9 and sometimes Grades 7 and 8 students in each setting. This included:

  - observations of students' days including follow-up interviews concerning issues arising from that day as seen by the student and researcher respectively;

  - individual interviews of approximately 20 minutes with each students about their perceptions of the program and any Transition Years components visibly embodied within it, about the experience of transition to Grade 9, and about their experiences of school more generally;

  - focus group interviews with groups of approximately four students in each case, to develop discussion and analysis of issues emerging in the individual interviews, and of initial impressions and analyses arising from them.

- Both French language cases involved semi-structured interviews with focus groups of parents.

- Finally, relevant documents were collected in all cases referring to the school's structure, pilot project developments and any other pertinent issues.

Case Study Analysis

Regular project meetings were held throughout the two years of the project. Initially, these meetings were used to coordinate the design, develop the instruments, and eventually to report progress in data collection and analysis. Finally, these regular meetings served as the forum for discussion and development of emergent themes and issues.

All interviews were tape recorded and fully transcribed. Fieldnotes were converted into legible and usable forms as soon as feasible after their collection. From these transcripts, research teams for each case study site developed draft case study descriptions which were shared with the larger team involved in the qualitative component. The process of sharing the cases, and their discussion in comparison with each other and with available theory and literature, led to modifications in the cases over time as they addressed common project themes in ways that accommodated the unique features of each setting.

Organization of this Volume

This chapter has outlined the conceptual framework of change, policy and practice for the qualitative case study component. We have defined our methodological approach and established its contribution to the overall project design. Details of our data collection and analysis have also been described. It is time now to look at our data, what we have learned from it and what their implications are for other people involved in Transition Years initiatives specifically, and for educational change in general. We begin by examining the multiple and sometimes conflicting realities of restructuring as they are experienced by teachers and students respectively. Each of our six cases is then described in detail, along with its implications for people addressing similar Transition Years components, or working in similar settings. After reviewing some differences in parents' attitudes towards Transition Years policies and to their own children's education in Grade 9, we draw some overall conclusions and implications from this part of the study.

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2.

Realities of Restructuring:

Three Critical Contrasts

By

Andy Hargreaves

Introduction

As the previous chapter showed, there is a growing body of literature advocating restructuring, outlining plans for restructuring, and describing administrative models of restructuring (Leithwood, Hargreaves and Gérin-Lajoie, 1993). There is much less literature on the realities of restructuring as experienced by teachers and students. This chapter and the ones to follow address these realities of restructuring. Case studies of individual school sites show how these realities are experienced in different Transition Years settings among administrators, teachers, and not least, students themselves. A further empirical chapter looks at the realities of restructuring from the standpoints of parents. This opening chapter takes three critical contrasts from the detailed observational data of teachers and students in just one pilot project setting to illustrate not just what these realities of restructuring are, but also to show how they differ between students and teachers, and between teachers dealing with different subjects, in different classes at different times of the day. For the most important point about the realities of restructuring is not just that they are different from the rhetoric, but that the realities are themselves complex and often conflicting. Knowing how to make restructuring work depends on understanding these complex and contradictory realities, and also on finding ways to bring together those who experience them in partnership, dialogue and shared community with one another.

Our opening portrayal of the realities of restructuring is presented in the form of three critical contrasts: between active teaching and passive "learning"; between the organization of student behaviour, and the behaviour of the school organization; and between the competence of teaching and the context which frames it. These critical contrasts raise issues which are then explored in greater detail through the case study descriptions in ensuing chapters.

First Contrast: Active Teaching, Passive Learning

Larry is a regular student: neither "gifted" nor learning disabled. He is ethnically Oriental. Left-handed, he writes rather slowly. Asked how his teachers would describe him, his response is "Quiet, but not as quiet as I am today, because you're with me!"

Larry's day begins with social studies — a lesson on leadership. It is a destreamed class of Grade 9 students. Looked at from the teacher's point of view, this is an active lesson, with different approaches to learning, requiring considerable planning and continuous monitoring. The broad sequence of the lesson is one of a brief (ten minutes or so) set of opening remarks by the teacher designed to settle the class down and introduce the topic. There is then a short period of question-and-answer work with the whole class about leadership, followed by students individually brainstorming their own personal lists of leaders and sharing them with their partners. Students, who are seated in pairs, are then invited three or four at a time to go up to the blackboard and list their own names of leaders. Other students then replace the existing ones and add further names until approximately fifty names in total have been itemized. The list is a diverse one, stretching from political figures such as Ghandi, Hitler, Pierre Trudeau, Boris Yeltzin, Margaret Thatcher and Malcolm X, to sports personalities such as Magic Johnson, and Mohammed Ali, to names in popular culture including Wayne Campbell (of Wayne's World), Cindy Crawford (a "supermodel") and Al Bundy (of the situation comedy, "Married with Children"). All names are accepted by the teacher.

The teacher circulates, watches the lists, corrects spelling where appropriate, comments generally on there being many good suggestions, and prods the class to reflect on their initial list of leaders being rather gender specific (i.e. all male). The teacher remarks that some people are getting off topic and draws the class back to one name, ice hockey player Wendel Clark, and asks why he is a leader. "Because he's looked up to", is the reply. On a second blackboard, the teacher then writes the heading: *Qualities and Characteristics of a Good Leader* and lists various items underneath; some herself, and some from class suggestions — for example "Goes out of their way to do the job." She corrects suggestions using "his" or "him" and asks for students to reformulate them in "non-gender language". After listing twenty-nine items, the teacher asks the students to list five of their own, then choose one leadership quality, justifying why they have selected it.

The teacher then says, "We have twenty-nine characteristics of a good leader. Can you put these in your notebooks and I'm going to ask you to do something with them." She then reaffirms this by writing on the board.

1. Which of the qualities is most important?
2. Which leader would you choose to run Canada and why?

She explains this to the class once more. When someone mutters "Al Bundy", the risible, low-life anti-hero of the sitcom "Married with Children", she adds, "could you please put a serious tone on it?" Students have to complete their answers to these questions for homework.

The class has run for an hour and ten-minutes. Looking at it from the teacher's viewpoint, it seems a particularly active and engaging lesson. Students have done individual writing, had a brief discussion in pairs, engaged with the teacher in whole-class interchanges, and participated in public brainstorming of ideas on the blackboard. Many leaders' names have been generated — drawn from politics, history, sport and popular culture. The teacher accepts all of these initially, even the most dubious ones, and in that sense, respects the learning principles of brainstorming. Yet, when students try to focus on some of the more outrageous suggestions as a basis for discussion or diversion, she gently, though firmly puts them back on task. She offers praise for their creativity and quality of ideas, yet also intervenes constructively to correct their spelling and to comment on their gender-biased contributions and sentence constructions. From the teacher's standpoint, this seems to be just the kind of creative, engaged and varied pattern of teaching and learning which Transition Years initiatives have been trying to bring about in Grade 9 classrooms. How does it look from where Larry is sitting, however; from his perspective in this class as a student?

After listening to the teacher from 8:50 until just after 9:00, Larry brainstorms his own list of leaders from across the world. At 9:08, while the teacher is still circulating around the class which is working in silence, Larry is completing his list and also looking over his neighbour's shoulder. He is then required, as are other students, to explain to his partner why the people he has listed are leaders. He then watches students compile the list of leaders on the board. Many are keen to do so ("I'm next!" "Me too!"). Larry adds one name of his own. The class is now generally watching, chatting and commenting on the names. Larry continues to watch.

At approximately 9:20, the class, including Larry, copy down the list of over fifty leaders' names into their books, accompanied by quiet background chatter. At 9:29, the teacher instructs class members to choose five leaders and write down why they are good ones. Larry makes no eye contact with the teacher here as she delivers her instructions, but continues to write. At 9:34, he is still writing in his slow, left hand. The teacher now selects the name Wendel Clark and discusses with the class why he is a leader. While the teacher then writes the "Qualities and Characteristics of a Good Leader" heading on the board, Larry silently scans his own list. At 9:37, while the teacher is listing leadership characteristics, Larry is still scanning. At 9:40, the teacher walks by and looks briefly at Larry's and his partner's lists. After she passes, Larry turns over the page, looks at the board list, looks at his partner's list from a distance, continues to do so as his teacher begins to rebuke his partner for chatting, then quietly tosses an eraser up and down. He looks back at the board, thumb in mouth, then back at his partner. It is 9:44 and unlike several classmates, he has not yet written anything about leadership qualities.

As the teacher talks with the class about leadership qualities, Larry begins to write in his book. He doesn't volunteer contributions to discussion. He is hunched over his work, looking forward, with a pencil in his hand. At 9:48, while the teacher is still soliciting ideas, he chats quietly to his partner; then looks forward, arms folded, hunched over again. By 9:51, the teacher has generated twenty-nine characteristics of good leaders and asks the class to put them in their notebooks. Larry begins to prepare to write again, looking at the board. At 9:52, he rises and sharpens his pencil, not actually having begun to write yet. After this, he returns and commences copying the list. He continues to write as the teacher issues instructions about selecting the most important leadership characteristic — a task that will provide the foundation for homework. When suggestions are sought for leaders who would be suitable to run Canada and the name "Al Bundy" is called out, Larry laughs with the rest of the class. Then he returns to copying his list. At 9:57, the teacher walks past, but Larry takes no notice. 9:59, and he is still writing. At 10:02, he is correcting something he has written with an eraser. Behind him, a student mutters that the "perfect leader would be me", and Larry smiles. At

10:04, Larry is still looking at the board and chatting to his partner intermittently. As the teacher issues homework instructions, Larry continues to talk to his partner. At 10:05, the class ends.

This is one classroom, one lesson, but not one common experience. The teacher's experience of this social studies lesson, and Larry's experience of it, seem very different. For the teacher, this is not a conventional, didactic lesson of the sort commonly vilified in secondary school classrooms. It is a lesson of busy, bustling activity; of efforts to secure student participation individually, in pairs, in brainstorming groups and in whole-class discussion. The teacher repeatedly monitors, intervenes, corrects, develops ideas,and keeps students on task while trying to retain their involvement. Active learning does not involve abdicating teaching! The teacher works hard at what she does.

Larry's involvement in the lesson is very different, though. Apart from a brief interaction of approximately three minutes duration, with his partner, about leadership characteristics, most of the lesson for him involves listening to the teacher, glancing back and forth between the board and his notes, but overwhelmingly, for long periods, and even while the teacher is talking and giving out instructions, copying a total of seventy-nine items off the blackboard into his exercise book.

From the teacher's vantage point, the social studies lesson is innovative and active. From the standpoint of Larry, the student, it is mainly routine and passive, comprising forms of listening and copying down that may present little or no improvement upon traditional textbook-based teaching. Our classroom observation data contain many other instances of this sort. In our ensuing case descriptions limitations of space have compelled us to be selective; which is why we are highlighting some of our observational data here. In general, our data contain many instances where teachers seem to be working hard to break the traditional paradigms of secondary school teaching, yet where, despite all the effort and ingenuity, meaningful student engagement of a different and better kind appears to remain elusive. How is this so? How does something so active and demanding for the teacher, remain so passive and routine for the student? How can these different realities of restructuring be reconciled and reconstructed? Even in the innovation-inclined settings we have been studying, how can the worlds of the teacher and the student be brought together more effectively? This is one of the most important challenges for schools implementing Transition Years initiatives — not the challenge of planning and programs, of systems and staff discussion, but of whether the realities of restructuring are ones which show fundamental differences and improvements in what young people learn, how they learn, and how well they learn, within their own classrooms.

Second Contrast: The Student and the Organization

Our second contrast is a briefer one. In *Rights of Passage*, Hargreaves and Earl (1990) argued that expanded systems of student evaluation try to recognize, reward and stimulate success in a wider range of achievements than those falling within a rather narrowly defined academic domain. Some Transition Years pilot projects have tried to bring about changes in student evaluation along these lines. In one of our case study sites, in particular, there are attempts to evaluate and recognize practical competences as well as more traditional intellectual ones, for instance. One item used to evaluate students in this school, as in many others, is that which records whether they are able to bring books and equipment to class.

Between classes, the halls of Larry's secondary school are not unlike those of many other secondary schools in North America. Students have a few minutes to more between classes. They go to their lockers, deposit their materials from the previous class, then locate and collect their books and equipment for the next one. There are many bodies milling about at this time with passing chatter, by-play, teasing, connecting with the peer group, bantering with rivals, and generally taking these informal and fast moving moments to reassert personal and social identities. While all this is going on, teachers and administrators sometimes patrol the halls, keeping order and discouraging loitering. In some schools, this process is relatively orderly and business-like. In others, it is chaotic and conflicted. In few cases is it anything other than fast and furious — one of the routine but also remarkable regularities of secondary school life.

Larry leaves his social studies class promptly at 10:07 and immediately becomes part of this process. He walks fast — not least, perhaps because there is a researcher accompanying him, (indeed scurrying along in an effort to keep up with him). He walks along a corridor, then along another one to a flight of stairs. Descending these, he turns and walks along half of another corridor to his locker, unlocks it, deposits his social studies materials and collects his equipment for science. As he does this, the Vice Principal arrives at the end of the line of lockers and calls out loudly, "O.K. guys, come on. Hurry things along!" Larry removes his books quickly, walks the rest of the corridor, up another flight of stairs, along another corridor and enter his next class, science, at 10:11. This class is already half full.

In just a few minutes, Larry has walked along four corridors, ascended or descended two flights of stairs, locked and relocked his locker, organized and exchanged his materials — all at a fast pace, amid considerable bustle accompanied by the urgent exhortations of the Vice Principal. This process is completed at least twice a day for a total of ten times a week.

Observing all this, one wonders whether the evaluation item assessing whether students can bring books and equipment to class, assesses their skills and abilities to be efficient and organized, or whether it assesses their ability and willingness to comply with a rather frantic and frenetic process of mass movement occasioned by a pattern of scheduling and room assignments that requires large bodies of people to circulate at a rapid pace several times a day. Does the evaluation item concerning books and equipment therefore measure the skills and capabilities of students, or does it measure the rationality of the organization and its scheduling ? This gives cause to reflect on whether and in what ways new patterns of student evaluation that record personal and practical skills as well as academic ones, acknowledge students' competences or record and thereby control their behavioural compliance; whether they are instruments to stimulate student development or devices of behavioural surveillance! These observations also raise questions about the basic patterns of scheduling and time organization in secondary schools, about the continuing regularities of secondary school life, which many pilot project schools are still tending to work around instead of addressing as a fundamental focal point for restructuring.

Third Contrast: Competence and Context

After science, Larry's Period 3 is French (Grade 9, destreamed). His class begins at 12:28. His teacher, Miss Roscow, whom I have observed before, tells me it will be "another Socratic lesson" The class is organized in three rows.

Larry sits next to the back with his exercise book in front of him. Miss Roscow writes the homework (Devoirs, p. 59) on the blackboard. There is quite a lot of chatting while she does this.

The students have photocopied worksheets in front of them. Miss Roscow goes through their homework with them (on these sheets). It involves identifying and positioning objects in sentences. She explains the exercises "en Français". Larry sits quietly, listens, looks at his paper then gets out of his seat to confer with two girls about the questions. While the class continues to work on the exercises, Miss Roscow is arranging papers on her desk and chatting to students near the front. Two boys are drumming loudly on their desks. Two others, in a semi-flirtatious manner, engage her in conversation about her weekend. Larry meanwhile is looking at his neighbour's work, and chatting quietly.

At 12:35, the class is now becoming very noisy and engaged in many conversations, while the teacher interacts in French with a smaller group. At 12:37, Miss Roscow addresses the whole class (Mesdames et Messieurs"), then in French she instructs them to turn to Unit 3 and signals for their attention with "Et puis!" Larry continues to chat with his partner. Miss Roscow now directs around half the class to continue with written exercises, while identifying and segregating the remainder of the students who have not completed homework and are therefore required to do it in class. Larry is not in the homework group. He seems uncertain as to what he is to do. He looks to the rear to check with other students.

By 12:43, the class has reorganized into two broad groups (although they are working individually within these groups). The homework group chats while the teacher clarifies the task for the rest of the group — there appears to be one task, undifferentiated by ability or level of difficulty. Miss Roscow is now questioning them about their answers in their worksheets concerned with placing objects in sentences. This group is quiet, but the homework group continues to chat and indeed is becoming a little boisterous. In dialogue with the teacher, Larry is selected to answer a couple of questions in French. Students are then asked to discuss, compare and correct their answers with partners, then list new ones on the blackboard. Larry and other students begin this at 12:50.

After discussing one question, Larry begins talking with his partner about hockey. He then goes to the board to write down further items but seems unclear about how to do this and is indeed blocked by a large group of other students already at the board, making quite a commotion. Larry waits at the back, smiling and chewing, then returns to his desk, fainting a "high five" to a fellow student on the way. Miss Roscow meanwhile, is busy with the homework group.

Over the next few minutes, Larry sits quietly, watches other students, chats to and laughs with a student in front, flicks paper with his partner and simulates table soccer on his desk, making goalposts with his fingers, through which his friend flicks the paper. Although the homework group is chatting quietly with the teacher, the rest of the class is now talking quite noisily. Larry continues to chat, flick paper, and now uses a pencil, twirling it as a baton in competition with his partner. There is more banter and interaction, then at 1:02, Miss Roscow calls for the whole class' attention and reinforces this by putting her finger on her lips, smiling, and waiting for silence. What follows is a question-and-answer session with the whole class to review and extend vocabulary, based on sentences or questions in the textbook (e.g. example are discussed of "un sport dangereux"). At 1:04, after a day of mainly sitting in classes and doing a lot of reading, writing, copying and listening (with the exception of practical work in science), Larry now has his finger in his textbook and is jiggling the paper up and down. While class discussion continues, he exchanges words with the students in front intermittently but over quite a period of time — in between which he catches bits of the question and answer discussion, and also continues flicking his book.

At 1:10, the teacher is now doing question and answer work about "sitcoms", but is having to work hard to maintain their attention: "Eh?" "Votre permission!", "O.K.", finger on lips, etc. Larry is still chatting and is flicking his book more agitatedly now. He starts to drum with his left hand. Miss Roscow makes two students turn forwards and face the front: "I'd like you to move your chairs forward: your talk is too distracting!"

"Tout le monde, ensemble — this is going to get a little boring so we'll do it differently" says the teacher, instructing the non-homework group to gather around her. The students bang their chairs noisily as they move to the front. Larry talks to his partner, offers humourous remarks on his paper and exchanges things, all as the teacher talks. Many of the class are talking while the teacher talks. "Écoutez, please — we'll get through this quick if we talk together", she says. It is now 1:20. The teacher talks with the class about an interesting upcoming part-time job she is taking. "How much are you getting paid?" — one student calls out. "None of your business", she retorts, although in a friendly way — she then shows them how to write "None of your business" in French. There is more joking between the teacher and class for the next few minutes.

At 1:29, Miss Roscow says "we've been off topic for cinq minutes". Larry has been very quiet during all of this except for quietly joking with his partner. A Socratic form of question and answer continues between the teacher and the class about restaurants, food, movies and aqua-parks, though all this is dispensed with good humour. Larry continues to sit quietly, looks at his page and chats to his partner. "Fermez les lèvres", she says, as she notices people talking.

At 1:38, Miss Roscow asks the class to put their work away and announces they are moving on to something else. Larry leans back and stretches. There is general chatter in the class. There is now more question and answer work with the class, during which Larry talks to the student in front and passes things under the desk to him. The teacher then describes the homework assignment, and at 1:47 dismisses the class, group by group.

This lesson, the third of the day for Larry is not at all an exemplary (in the sense of excellent) case of instruction for the Transition Years or indeed for any other point in the schooling processes. While the teacher's approach is friendly, the class are working rather unimaginatively with homework assignments, worksheets and texts as well as listening to the teacher and engaging in question-and-answer routines with her. For Larry, as for the rest of the class, this is the third class of the day, only one of which (science) has involved students in anything more than listening, copying and making occasional notes. This will be true even in the family studies lesson to follow where, despite the fact that students will be divided into groups to study the meals, customs and tourist attractions of different countries (one per group), they will spend most time working as individuals within the group (one person on food, one on customs etc), leafing through books for material then copying it down for their own sub-topic; in a strict and rather mechanical division of labour. This is working individually *within* a group, not collectively *as* a group. By third period, therefore, there is considerable restlessness which is expressed in physical agitation after all this sitting, listening and copying, drumming, chewing, flicking, shuffling, chattering and calling out. In a relatively public, Socratic format, the teacher is therefore led to allowing some chatter while she talks over it, or to making repeated interventions — finger on lips, movement of disruptive students, demands to "Écoutez" etc. There is no dramatic breakdown of order, no threats to physical safety, but in this relatively formal, conventional setting, the teacher has to work hard and relentlessly to maintain attention and keep order.

Is Miss Roscow an incompetent, unskilled, unimaginative or simply inexperienced teacher? (She is still in her twenties and has been teaching a little over two years). Had this been the only observation, it would not be difficult to draw such a conclusion of incompetence or inexperience, but these would be an inferences made out of context. On a previous day, there had been an opportunity to observe Miss Roscow's teaching for a whole day across several classes. Here she communicated an impression of a very different kind of teacher indeed — so much so, in fact, that during the lesson involving Larry, I recorded "I can't believe this is the same teacher I was with before!"

During this earlier period of observation, I had witnessed Miss Roscow teaching a Grade 11 French class in a way that displayed extensive planning, great imagination and considerable dexterity in creating and managing a learning environment that included a number of different learning centres, each requiring different kinds of active student involvement that met principles of relevance, imagination and challenge (Hargreaves and Earl, 1990). All the activities addressed the theme of "Cinéma". One group was listening and responding to French songs on an audiocassette. (The teacher supplied a range of genres here including rock, ballads, "new wave", and even comedians). A second was reading real reviews of English movies in French, and writing their own responses in French also. A third group was answering written questions on French movie magazines (copies of "Première" magazine) they had been assigned. A fourth group read published movie reviews on to tape to practice pronunciation, then wrote brief reviews of their own. A fifth worked on a deceptively simple, but cognitively and socially complex task of matching lists of movie titles in English with titles of the same movies in French. This was often quite difficult because the translations were not literal (for instance, "Beaches" was "Entre Deux Plages") and therefore required dictionary work, scanning for context and considerable cooperative discussion. Half way through the lesson, the groups rotated to their next Learning Centre — full progression through which would take several lessons in all.

There were no discipline problems with this class. Miss Roscow did not need to work at keeping order. The students were engaged, indeed engrossed in the activities of learning which were relevant to their interests and lives, emotionally enjoyable, socially connected, yet academically demanding. This engaging strategy of teaching and learning, often thought more appropriate, only for elementary-age students, interestingly appears to work well here with older students in a subject sometimes thought inappropriate to patterns of learning that are anything less than linear. It impressively explodes the commonly held myth that rigour can only be achieved at the price of relevance. But are these the limits of its application in secondary school? Can more active and enriching teaching strategies only be applied in secondary schools to older, abler, more motivated students, perhaps?

Insight on this issue can be gained from turning to Miss Roscow's next lesson. This was a Grade 9, destreamed English class focusing on a theme of myths, fables and legends. With their hats, T-shirts, sweatshirts and running shoes, these students were definitely less blasé and sophisticated than their more neatly attired and generally more poised Grade 11 counterparts. But this class was also exposed to and engaged in cooperative, active, group-based learning. Groups of students were engaged in constructing their own fables. One group was choosing two creatures from a list (e.g. an eagle and a mouse), selecting a venue (e.g. a graveyard) then cooperatively developing a plot. Another was writing a story for an existing fable — "a wolf in sheep's clothing" — where the students (whom the teacher described as probably destined for "general level" courses in Grade 10) animatedly described to me how a wolf dresses up as a sheep, invites another sheep for dinner, and announces after they have dined that what it has just eaten is rack of lamb! During all this, Miss Roscow circulated around the class supporting groups and helping with queries — focusing on the task with little need to attend to classroom management. Due to the intensity of the students' engagement, she closed the class by announcing "a lot of you worked really well today" — and they had. Once more, this seems to be an exemplary case (in the sense of excellent) of effective use of active and cooperative learning in a destreamed Grade 9 setting — and Miss Roscow certainly came across as a particularly impressive exponent of the method.

How can this be the same teacher whose rather uninspiring destreamed French class I described earlier? How can she be such a Jekyll-and-Hyde? The progress of the remainder of her day offers us some clues. Miss Roscow had only twenty-five minutes for lunch, since she had an appointment with a student for whom she was a "mentor" at 12:00. She collected some lunch, found a quiet corner in the staffroom, and developed a test on an overhead transparency for her next class. She would prepare the second half of the text in class, she said, while students were doing the first half. As she walked to the staffroom, she told me that she goes period-period-space-period. By the fourth period, she's *really* tired. If she's "depressed and tired", she added, "she can't run that fast", and her lessons in last period are therefore not particularly inspiring. And so it was with her period 4, mixed ability Grade 9 French class, with public question-and-answer work around vocabulary where the teacher once more had to work hard to keep order in this setting of public interaction (unlike the cooperative learning, group-based classes where classroom management was scarcely a problem at all.). The ensuing test quietened the class down. This certainly created order, but not much inspiration!.

Should Miss Roscow simply work harder to be more consistent with *all* her classes? Is her commitment, consistency and ingenuity at fault? In part, she herself recognizes the need for further improvement when she says that with the Grade 9, her basic style is Socratic, though she recognizes "the kids get bored with this". Yet, we observed success with active methods in Grade 9 English, if not in Grade 9 French. It is possible, therefore, that the range of ability in Grade 9 French is simply more of a challenge for her than it is in Grade 9 English. Because of the ability range and the behavioural problems "I've had to kind of be very traditional for them, very structured", she said.

At the same time, as further chapters will record in the case of many other teachers, Miss Roscow recalls the immense amount of time she has invested in planning French units and in coming to understand and use the English units: weeks of time, weekends, late nights. "For about two weeks I've been on sort of a high, planning this Grade 11 unit, getting things organized so I know what's coming before the March break, what I have to get done, what I need to get planned, and so on," she said.

Pointing to herself and several colleagues, Miss Roscow refers to the immense pressure this puts on oneself and one's personal life "and so... a lot of older teachers are going to have an already fixed family, personal kind of life and who wants to give that up?" Committed, hard working, imaginative and effective as she is in many areas of her teaching, she nonetheless feels that "I don't think everyone should have to do this much work!"

Teachers don't just have jobs. They have lives as well; lives with interests that need enriching and obligations that need fulfilling. This is one of the inescapable realities of restructuring; one that affects the capacity of restructuring to be sustained over time and across many settings.

What this third critical contrast reveals is that much of what teachers do and how effective they are is not so much a matter of skill, knowledge or training in particular methods or techniques (though these things are important), but of context. Some classes are perceived as more difficult and demanding than others (and Grade 9 destreamed French is certainly one of those). Some classes occur at the wrong end of the day when effort is expended and structures therefore tend to become more rigid, discipline more demanding and classroom management a little more casual, (with implications for scheduling more challenging classes earlier, and for finding ways for teachers to pace themselves more effectively). And while this teacher and this setting clearly illustrate the exciting possibilities for creating new paradigms of secondary school teaching, the demanding nature of planning, preparation and innovation even among extremely capable teachers who are highly committed, raises questions about how long teachers can sustain this level of commitment, whether many other teachers could do so (especially those in later career); whether ethically it is appropriate to ask for these levels of commitment from most secondary school teachers; or whether the extra energy required is a short-term surge that is necessary for creating (but not so much for sustaining) new paradigms of teaching and learning. (Miss Roscow herself stated that after two years, she was now just beginning to be able to start improvising cooperative learning without laborious prior planning, in the way that may other teachers would already improvise Socratic methods, of a more conventional kind).

Conclusion

These critical contrasts have been presented to illustrate some of the complex and often conflicting realities of restructuring as students and teachers experience them. The contrasts highlight a number of key issues to which we will return repeatedly during our discussions of change substance and change process within the individual school case studies that follow. They are:

- the realities of restructuring for teachers and students may be very different. Lessons that look and feel active and cooperative for the teacher, may remain predominantly experience of isolated learning for the student. Synchronizing these different realities is difficult and demanding, and an ongoing challenge for those involved in restructuring. Teachers may need better and more continuous feedback from their students about the effectiveness of the program and their teaching through evidence of how students perceive and respond to these things. This may call for more conferencing and self-assessment between teachers and students, within newly developed systems of evaluation.

- restructuring means not only changing the program, the way students are grouped by ability, or even how they are taught. It also means attending to some of the fundamental regularities of schooling which currently constrain students' and teachers' working lives in ways that inhibit the quality of teaching and learning they can deliver. The 70-minute period, the mass movement of students around the school between classes, and the norm of single classes being taught by single teachers, are among these regularities that need to be addressed. In these respects, transforming the *context* of teaching in ways that make the tasks of better teaching easier, is as important, if not more so, than inservice training to develop any new *competencies* of teaching.

- the data described here clearly indicate that it is possible to teach destreamed classes effectively. Even for the same teacher, learning can be more effective, and discipline less demanding, if the teaching and learning are planned to engage students in cooperative tasks that are relevant, imaginative and challenging. Many teachers would feel proud to be able to emulate what Miss Roscow has modelled. But this kind of teaching is demonstrably difficult. It takes time, planning and preparation: lots of it. If teachers are always "on", the reality of restructuring is such that quality will almost certainly sag at particular points in the day. Teachers are only human, and their finite resources of health and energy will realistically and inevitably lead to troughs as well as peaks in their levels of performance on a fairly regular basis. Is this an inevitable price of active teaching and learning? Or are there more effective ways where teachers can support each other in team settings so that some can be "on" and some less fully engaged, at any one point? In addition, how long can teachers work at this pitch? Is active teaching and learning a perpetual and unsustainable demand — or do the pressures ease up once the initial stages of implementation have been passed? And can all teachers be as energetic and indefatigable as the younger teacher described here? What are the realities of restructuring for other teachers in other settings, and what patterns of and supports for implementation need to be devised for them?

The realities of restructuring are often very different from the rhetoric. Actions and behaviours are often quite different from plans and designs. And the realities often differ depending on your standpoint in the classroom or the school. Students' realities are different from teachers' realities, and teachers' realities often different again from those of their administrators. The cases that follow, enable us in detailed and intensive ways to document these diverging realities of restructuring among students, teachers and administrators in pilot project sites.

As we document these cases, we will not only interpret and analyze these complex realities. We will also explore ways in which teachers and administrators might develop greater awareness of these differing realities, and look at how they might devise better ways to bring them more closely together through more inclusive processes of learning, decision-making and innovation.

As this opening analysis has shown our cases will also indicate that it *is* possible to break the conventional paradigms of teaching and learning that have prevailed for many years within the Transition Years. They will illustrate effective ways to build and strengthen meaningful and productive interaction between teachers and students in Grades 7 and 8, and those in Grade 9; to create senses of and commitments to Francophone identity; to organize and teach destreamed Grade 9 classes in practical and productive ways; to model emerging patterns of servant leadership in schools and communities; and to involve students more actively in their own learning; for example. In these respects, the cases will show how the persistent regularities of teaching, learning, leadership, organization, curriculum and evaluation in Grades 7, 8 and 9 can be changed in ways that are educationally positive and practical.

At the same time, our cases will also reveal the demands and difficulties of bringing these restructured patterns of schooling into being and maintaining them over time. They will reaffirm existing understandings that most meaningful and substantial change that is meant to impact upon the classroom, is slow and may take at least five years to translate from staffroom talk into classroom action (Miles & Huberman, 1980). In this respect, we would not reasonably expect profound and pervasive changes in classroom practice that are a specific result of Transition Years Pilot Project initiatives to become extensively evident within the first two years of the pilot project operation that were investigated through this research.

Some of the examples described in this chapter, as well as those that will be portrayed in the chapters to follow also point to the fact that teachers' and others' early experiences of implementation are often unavoidably clumsy, unskilled, uncertain, muddled, experimental, confusing and dispiriting, as they "unlearn" many of the skills, habits and routines with which they have become comfortable and to which they have became accustomed, as they begin to acquire and apply new ones. These early experiences of implementation are sometimes exciting and exhilarating. Sometimes they are deeply disappointing. Before they become routine, they are almost always demanding and are invariably time-consuming. The familiar experience of this "implementation dip" in schools as in other organizations is that things often get worse before they get better (Fullan, 1991). Given that our case analyses were conducted within the first two years, we would therefore expect to see, as we already have seen and will see later, examples of excitement and exhilaration among those involved in change, but also of uncertainty, self-doubt, conflict, frustration and sheer exhaustion. We would expect these things not as interruptions to or aberrant examples of the implementation process, but as normal features of implementation itself.

The data discussed so far, as well as those that will follow later, also raise questions about how to sustain and diffuse school restructuring in the Transition Years not just for a short time, or for a small number of sites voluntarily committed to change, but for many schools and teachers over a long period of time. The demands of restructuring, we have already seen, can have an all-consuming effect on teachers' working lives. How long can such levels of commitment be sustained before teachers burn out or leave? What levels of commitment or types of commitment can reasonably be demanded from different kinds of teachers — teachers at varying points in their career; teachers with different levels of commitments outside their work in family, community and so on? The realities of restructuring are in this sense, not only the realities of exceptional or exemplary cases, but the realities of restructuring that can be sustained over time, that can be accommodated by different kinds of teachers in different kinds of settings, and that are manageable within the wider context of teachers' working lives.

The following cases, described richly and intensively according to issues which students, teachers and administrators themselves identified as being important (and not as we might have tried to predict beforehand), offer some ways of approaching these issues by helping us to come to grips with the complex and often conflicting realities of restructuring through the voices of those who directly experience them. One value of case studies of educational change is that they give public voice to those who experience change and are most directly affected by it. It is to those voices and the realities that they articulate, that we turn next.

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3.

Allendale School:

Multiple Perspectives of Choosing Change

By

Mary Beattie and Dennis Thiessen

The Context

Allendale School is a large secondary school situated in a densely populated, multi-cultural, multi-lingual, urban setting and it provides programs and opportunities for students in both academic and technological areas. The school is part of a large school board that prides itself on being at the forefront of education as it relates to the working and learning environments of teachers and students, and to concern for gender, racial and economic issues. We were there in February, 1992 when the activities of Black History month and the events of a week leading up to Valentine's Day provided additional richness to the diversity and multiplicity of events which make up the daily life of this school. Our purpose was to focus on the process and substance of changes within the Transition Years initiative and to understand and represent the qualities and complexities of change as they are being experienced by teachers and students in this school. The account we present here attempts to represent the multiple voices we heard as we talked to administrators, teachers, students and support staff, listened to them in individual and group interviews, observed teachers and students in their classrooms, and read the documents, school and committee plans, and curriculum materials they provided for us.

The case of Allendale School is a case of the restructuring of a school through making changes in the organization and the culture of the school, and creating a school within a school through the Transition Years initiatives. Allendale had been experiencing problems in student retention, in student achievement results, in student attendance, and feeling a pressing need to provide a safe, secure environment for students. In the 1989-1990 year, a Quality Assurance Review was conducted to determine ways in which to address these concerns, and based on the recommendations, the administration of the school put forward a strategic plan for a changed school structure, school environment, instructional methods, co-instructional program, advocacy and support services, new links with the community and a new leadership structure which included co-ordinators of intermediate education, equity and co-instructional programs.

In the Spring of 1990, the Board of Education responded to the Ministry of Education's request for proposals for Transition Years pilot project funding and the restructuring of Allendale's Grade Nine program was supported by the grant from this project. In September 1990, grade nine programs were destreamed, and delabelled, and steps were taken to initiate an integrated and holistic curriculum within which teaching strategies and learning situations would address the characteristics and needs of early adolescents who:

> come from a diversity of cultural, racial, economic and educational backgrounds. This diversity is individually expressed through a variety of learning strengths and weaknesses. Recognition of this diversity requires a structuring of program that is based on the tenets of equity regarding social identities such as race, gender, class, ethnicity and faith, and thus seeks to provide equality of access, opportunity and outcome.
>
> (Allendale School Directional Statements, March, 1990)

Within the context of a whole-school restructuring plan which focuses on destreaming, coring and on transition (between 8 to 9 and 9 to 10), the key concepts of the Transition Years initiative for grade nine at Allendale can be summarized thus:

Structure:

- Core groups of 20 students
- Modules and half credits

Delivery:

- Student Centred Learning
- Team Teaching

Instructional and Co-Instructional:

- Cross-Curricular Learning Outcomes
- Integrated Courses of Study
- Performance Based Evaluation
- Job Shadow
- Orientation Activities

Support and Advocacy:

- Individual Education Plan
- Staff Advisors

Professional Development for Teachers.

- Classroom Management

- Co-operative Learning
- Interdisciplinary Unit Planning
- Assessment and Evaluation

The Allendale student population represents over sixty countries and language groups. Seventy percent are not Canadian born. One third were born where English is not the first language, approximately one third were born in the Caribbean and one third were born in Canada. The countries other than Canada (434) most represented in the student population were Cambodia (38), El Salvador (47), Guyana (114), India (62), Jamaica (139), Laos (34), Vietnam (232), Sri Lanka(36), Trinidad/Tobago(21). The remaining students were from over fifty other countries. A demographic profile of the school was first compiled by the School Review Team in May 1990 and a recommendation was made by the team that the profile be reviewed by all staff in preparation for each semester as "the significance of these statistics is critical to the delivery of program and the purchase of materials". The above distribution was reported by the school administration in the fall of 1992.

Allendale's staff consists of 99 teachers, 1 principal, 4 vice-principals, and 18 in-school leaders; 28 operations staff (secretaries, caretakers, para-professionals, outreach workers) and 22 positions of responsibility (beyond department heads of subject areas). Many of the academic staff have been at Allendale for five or more years and a few have been there for over 25 years. Nearly forty teachers hold in-school leadership positions and together with the department heads of subject areas, positions of responsibility are held by teachers in multicultural studies, youth services, equity across the curriculum, co-instructional activities, literacy and learning services, school and community services and intermediate education.

The Study

Positive Peer Culture

Citizenship

Perfect Attendance

This large display in the entryway of Allendale School focusing on positive peer culture, citizenship and perfect attendance, provided a context and a frame for our observations in classrooms and throughout the school during the week of February

9-14, 1992. It was one of the first things we saw each time we had visited the school prior to that week and when we returned for subsequent visits, it continually reminded us of the school's mission and the goals of the teachers and administration. The display provided a frame within which we experienced the place and the people, and within which we made observations and constructed meanings as we continually tried to understand the community and the individuals within it as they understand themselves.

Prior to our scheduled visit during the week of February 9-14, we held meetings for all teachers, co-ordinators and students involved in the study, provided them with an overview of our intended activities, requested acceptance of our proposed agenda and permission to proceed. We explained our interest in understanding the experience of transition from the teachers' and students' perspectives and outlined our plan to spend one whole day with each of the three teachers and students nominated for this part of the study. We also explained that we would hold individual interviews with each teacher and student prior to and at the end of the day, and that we would hold large group interviews for the nine teachers and nine students in the study at the end of the week.

During the week of February 9-14, we held an interview of approximately one hour and a half with each of the three selected teachers and students at the beginning of the week. We then spent a school day with each of them and held a second interview of approximately one hour and a half at the end of the school day. On the Friday of that week, we held two group interviews of approximately one hour and a half each; one with the nine teachers and the other with the nine students. Each of these large groups included the three persons we had worked with during the week.

The selection of teachers and students for the study was orchestrated by the school administration. Teachers were invited to participate by one of the administrative team and students were selected on the basis of nominations received from grade nine teachers and the Intermediate Co-ordinator. The nine teachers who participated in the group interview were nominated by the school administration on the basis of their interest in and ability to provide us with insights and details of the initiatives in the school and to do so from as wide a range of perspectives and experiences as possible. These nine teachers varied in the subjects and grade levels they taught, their years of teaching and of teaching in this school, their gender, culture and race and in the degree of their support for the changes. The three teachers with whom we worked intensively through the week had been selected likewise but with the additional criteria that they were also teaching destreamed classes of grade nine students and were involved in Transition Years initiatives within the school. The teachers and students in the larger group then, were selected to provide as much diversity and variation as possible and on the basis that these diverse views and insights would provide a breadth of perspective which would enrich those gained during the week.

The Teachers

Three Teachers

The three teachers with whom we worked during our week at Allendale – Chad, Mary and Bob – were volunteers to grade nine teaching, supportive of the changes being made in that program and actively involved in furthering the Transition Years initiatives within their classrooms and within the school community. Two of these teachers, Chad and Bob came to Allendale from the junior high school where they had taught for 21 and 14 years respectively. Mary is a young, first year teacher who came directly to the school from a Faculty of Education. Each of these teachers expressed their support for the restructured grade nine program which was attempting to provide the necessary support and encouragement for the early adolescent, whose social and emotional development was in a transitionary phase and needed a school program which acknowledged this. When Mary speaks of her commitment, she relates it to her own personal experiences in grade nine where she did not get the guidance and attention she needed to get established in the high school. She vividly recalls "feeling so lonely and wanting to cry yet nobody knew how I felt. There was no program to help me with the transition, no buddy system and the teacher didn't even know that I'd moved (from the U.S.)". Bob and Chad speak of the work they have done within the activities of the Transition Years initiatives as helping students to develop self-confidence, to develop organizational skills and to learn how to learn for themselves.

Chad is a teacher with twenty four years of teaching experience, three of which have been at Allendale and the remainder of which were spent at a junior high school within the school board. He is a high school specialist in mathematics and boys' physical education. He is currently teaching mathematics to grades nine, ten and eleven. For twenty one years of his teaching career, he taught physical education to grades seven, eight and nine and was a head of the physical education department for at least three-quarters of that time. Chad is a member of several school committees focusing on Transition Issues (such as the Intermediate Curriculum Committee which looks at ways to integrate different aspects of the science/mathematics program, to identify an essential learnings component of that program and to look at a common assessment and evaluation scheme). He is also a member of in-school committees for grade nine students "welcoming activities" such as special assemblies designed to help students get to know the school and the staff, a volleyball tournament, and an outing at the beginning of the school year to a local park where teachers and students play co-operative games and have a barbecued lunch together. Chad is involved in extra-curricular coaching, in a Math Club, in grade nine House League activities and each morning between seven and nine o'clock, he provides extra help in mathematics for the students in his classes.

Bob is a science and biology teacher with twenty one years of teaching experience, four of them at Allendale and the rest at the junior high level, within the school board. He holds a High School Specialist qualification in environmental science and is an assistant head of the science department. He is a member of a grade nine mathematics/science team whose activities focus on the integration of aspects of the mathematics/science curriculum, the identification of teaching strategies necessary to help students "get used to the place", the determining of learning outcomes, and a common evaluation scheme. Bob is also active in Transition Years "welcoming activities" such as the Volleyball League, for which he is the co-ordinator and he organizes a chess club for all grade levels within the school.

Mary is a young, first year teacher who has just graduated from an Intermediate/Senior program at a Faculty of Education where her teachable subjects were science and mathematics. She is active on several Transition Years Committees such as the Intermediate Curriculum Committee (Transition Years) and has been involved in all of the "welcoming activities" for grade nine students to the school. As a newcomer to the school, Mary found that her involvement in these activities benefited her greatly as in helping students to become oriented to the people and the programs of the school, she also got to know the students, the support staff and the programs. These "welcoming activities" included assemblies focused on the counselling services of the school and the counsellors, the Positive Peer Culture and the sports and extra-curricular program. Mary has initiated an aerobics and weights club for the girls and hopes to organize some field trips for students in the latter part of the year, to "keep the community building going". Like Chad and Bob, she attends workshops such as co-operative learning in science in order to help her with her grade nine classes and to further the Transition Years Initiatives in her own classroom.

Themes in Practice

> A girl was walking along the beach and bending down every few yards to throw back into the ocean, the fish that were coming up on to the beach. A passer-by who was watching, exclaimed to the girl, "What you are doing does not matter. You are wasting your time when you can never hope to throw them all back in." The girl smiled as she bent down to pick up another fish, and as she threw it back into the ocean she said, "It matters to this one."

This story, was told by Chad, one of the grade nine teachers to explain his philosophy of teaching. The story had been told to him and he explained that it illustrated his belief that even in this society where family and religious values are breaking down, there is always hope for human nature. For him, this story captured the way in which he understood his teaching and the attention he paid to students' lives at Allendale. He finished by saying again, "The ones you take time to touch, it matters to them."

The story illustrates one teacher's philosophy concerning the classes of grade nine students he taught. It is also illustrative of the theme of "caring for students' lives" which runs through the conversations, interviews and classroom observations we had with all the teachers at Allendale. This theme permeates the other two themes identified here — "recasting themselves as classroom practitioners" and of "working as collaborative colleagues". It illuminates the ways in which the teachers with whom we worked describe their experience of transition and the ways in which they understand themselves as classroom practitioners, as collaborative colleagues and plan their current and future teaching.

Caring for Students' Lives.

The day-to day details of the Transition Years initiative are understood by the teachers as acknowledging and responding to the social, emotional, intellectual and physical characteristics and needs of each student in the program. Caring for students' lives means providing conditions of equity for all students. It involves being attentive to the whole person in a way that requires the teachers to create a connection with each student, to get to know them and to relate to them as persons. It requires involvement in many of the details of the lives students' bring with them to the classroom, and in helping them to work out the problems which stand in the way of classroom learning. As well as being responsible for the curriculum of the classroom, the teachers are also heavily involved in the extra-curricular programs of the school and in the special activities organized for grade nine students.

This way of teaching is satisfying to the teachers in that they feel they are making a difference in students' lives but it is also physically and emotionally exhausting. The levels of listening, questioning, attentiveness, flexibility, involvement and interaction with students required of them, takes its toll on the teachers' own lives, requiring as it does, high levels of emotional, social, moral and intellectual involvement on each teacher's part. As one teacher said about teaching classes of destreamed grade nines: "After the grade nines, teaching O.A.C's is like being on summer vacation, energy level wise.", to which another replied "That's right, it is physically exhausting and you have to be up for it."

The tensions inherent in this theme of "caring for students' lives" come to the surface within teachers' accounts of their efforts to reconcile equity and excellence and their struggles to accommodate social and academic goals within their classroom practice. The tension between these two was heard throughout conversations, interviews and in classroom practice. Chad described the way these opposing pulls are felt in practice and identified some of the difficulties of living out this way of teaching:

> I certainly hope that everyone is getting a fair shake because I would like to think that my students are getting what's best for them whether they are at the top end or the bottom end. There seems to be bottom end interest but there doesn't seem to be a whole lot of upper end interest. There's not a whole lot of really good enrichment...

> I think success is the name of the game and you just have to keep building on whatever successes they are capable of getting. Sometimes you get these behavioural exteriors that are there because the student has never experienced success. The problem however is that you don't have time to go into some of these situations because you have twenty kids, curriculum from the board and I imagine some pressures from the Ministry about bench-marking and diagnostic testing.
>
> There are an awful lot of restrictions and requirements with regard to content and the evaluation marks and levels and it makes me sad to some extent because in this semester just past, I had two girls in my class who are just absolutely wonderful people, but they have no mathematical ability. Although we are giving them a half credit, it is certainly not representative of their mathematical ability......We have tried working with them in a tutor situation, we have brought them in at noon hour for a month's activities to try and bring up their grades, to improve their skills, to give them mastery loop. They know it for the moment but their power of retention and their conceptualizing is very weak......Then when they move up into the next grade, you know what your colleague is going to say, "Hey, what did they learn last year" It's not what they learned, it's what they remembered, because they learned everything that everyone else learned, it is just that they cannot remember it. I guess you penalize them for that because you don't give these students a high mark, but is that fair ? I don't know but they don't have it next year in grade ten and they are definitely not going to remember any more if you keep them back and then you have the social implications, so what is the answer? You can't leave them there and you are in trouble if you move them up and you don't want to label them by putting them into a special program whatever that may be.

Teachers' efforts to answer questions like these and to reconcile equity and excellence, social and academic issues, involve getting to know students as people as well as helping them to obtain their credits. Their efforts entail spending time with students outside the classroom to get inside those "behavioural exteriors" and involve creating relationships with students within which classroom difficulties can be addressed from any number of different perspectives. They entail providing many hours of extra help for students before and after school, and being active in the orientation, extra curricular, and special grade nine activities designed to make new students to the school feel special, welcome, and that they belong. They also entail developing and nurturing a program of Positive Peer Culture, where students can earn credits as they learn social, leadership and conflict resolution skills, and work together to solve the problems which emerge from the life of the classroom and the school. In this program, students are encouraged to learn the skills which will enable them to learn better in the classroom and to support and facilitate the learning of others.

> Learn respect for yourself and others through the Human Relations course. Using group discussion you will develop listening skills, be able to identify and solve problems, and understand what a conflict is and how to resolve it. Students involved in this program will demonstrate leadership skills both in the class and around the school by recognizing and confronting problems and putting into practice the principles of the Positive Peer Culture Program. (Grade Nine Program)

This theme of "caring for students' lives" is supported by the work of Stager and Fullan (1992), whose study of the destreaming issue brought them to this school and to ascertain that:

> issues relating to the moral purpose of education emerged frequently in interviews with teachers, both when they talked about themselves as teachers and when they talked about the school as a whole. Finally, in the school, it was evident that personal purpose and vision was, for several people, indeed being recast in broader social and moral terms, and being linked to a broader agenda for social improvement. (Stager and Fullan, 1992).

This "caring for students' lives" evident in teachers' accounts of their teaching and in their classroom practices is described by Stager and Fullan (1992) as "moral purpose" and these authors put forward the view that it is this combination of change-agentry and moral purpose amongst administrators and teachers which is most likely to make a breakthrough in efforts to improve schools. The sense of making a difference in students' lives comes through in conversations, interviews and in teachers' practice and the teachers understand the focus on organizational, social and behavioural skills within the grade nine program as providing students with the "foundations" for future high school learning, supporting them with their social and emotional development and helping them to learn how to learn.

Within this context, the tension between providing equity of access and outcome for all students and concern for the "kids at the top end" was expressed by all the teachers. The tension prevailed throughout and each teacher talked about dealing with it in his or her own way, acknowledging its existence and expressing a hope that the focus they had collectively chosen would prove beneficial in the long run and have an effect on student self-esteem, student- achievement and on the drop out rate. Equity of outcome for the top students in the class is problematic and teachers spoke of needing to focus on this issue and to struggle with ways to deal with it in future budget and planning sessions and of the necessity to purchase diverse resources to support them as they explore their various options in the classroom.

One of the specific ways in which the teachers are dealing with this issue is to design examinations with an essentials requirement for grade nine students. As a team, the teachers have spent many hours together identifying the essential components of the grade nine course in order to determine whether a student is ready to move from grade nine to grade ten, and to be successful there. Each question on the examination has subparts and if the student is to pass the course, he or she must achieve a certain percentage on these essential requirements (or A parts) of the questions. The B part of each question then goes further into the knowledge of the student, and a successful percentage of right answers on these questions would lead a student into the higher range of marks. This initiative originated within the grade nine curriculum committee, was picked up by the entire mathematics department and is currently under discussion as a whole-school initiative. Thus, in a "caring for students' whole lives" orientation to teaching, the teachers are individually and collectively working out the details of this in their own practice and committee work, extending it out to their departments and to the whole school and in this way, recasting their own moral purpose and vision within an increasingly larger context.

Recasting Themselves as Classroom Practitioners

Within the context of the Transition Years initiatives, a school undergoing restructuring, and a changing student population, each teacher was also in transition and engaged in professional development activities to deal with their changed circumstances. Each of the teachers with whom we worked sees the necessity to recast who they are as a classroom practitioner, to adopt new teaching strategies and ways of structuring classroom experiences for students, to adapt their existing ways of helping students to learn, and to work together to teach in ways that will increasingly help students to learn. All three teachers believe in the necessity to provide a program for grade nine students which will help each student with the transition to a new school, will engender trust and a sense of belonging and will provide the "foundations" for future work at the high school level. All three are in agreement with the changes being made in the grade nine program, the kinds of teaching and assessment strategies being encouraged and with an approach to teaching and learning where the intellectual, social, emotional, moral, physical and aesthetic development of the student are seen to be interconnected. Each teacher plays out this agreement and understanding in the classroom in ways which were expressed by Bob as focusing on "helping students to feel that they belong, will help them to develop self confidence and organizational skills and to learn how to learn." For Bob, this means working towards designating certain rooms within the school as "grade nine" rooms where "the nines" will have all their classes, can see their work displayed on the walls and can therefore feel a sense of ownership and pride about their own place. Separate and combined assemblies, their own teachers and special extra-curricular and social events would support this school-within a school focus and help students to deal with the "small fish in a big pond" syndrome so prevalent in large secondary schools.

All three grade nine teachers had attended professional development sessions, conferences and inservice workshops designed to help them to incorporate new strategies into their teaching repertoire and to plan programs which would enhance their practice as it related to the needs and characteristics of the early adolescents they taught. Interdisciplinary units were designed and developed at departmental and interdepartmental team meetings in order that students should "see the relevance of what we are doing in different subjects and see the interrelationship between school subjects and life skills" (Bob). Additionally, the Board wide Supervision for Growth program was linked to the Transition Years initiatives focus and the teachers identified their own areas for growth, the indicators of success and the criteria for the evaluation of their performance.

In the teachers' classrooms, the teachers were using a range of teaching strategies designed to help students achieve the multi-focused set of objectives set out by the team for the mathematics /science unit and linked to the key concepts of the Transition Years Initiative. Teachers were using a variety of activities to have students focus on the interrelationships between the subjects and on the generic skills and strategies common to both subjects. Thus, the criteria for success were shifted from the mastery of subject content to the four-pronged set of objectives, outlined here:

a) **Understanding the Scientific Method**

- The Scientific Method as an approach to Problem Solving
- Methods and formats
- Standardized format.

b) **Organizational Skills**

- Writing Up of Experiments
- Writing Up of Labs.
- Keeping Notebooks
- Diagrams

c) **Ability to use and take care of equipment**

- Care and safety
- The foundations of equipment use and purpose.

d) **Behavioural Skills and Attitudes**

- Values
- Ethics
- Understanding and following rules
- Respect for self and others
- Consistency

In one of the science lessons, students received an introductory lesson on using the triple beam balance. They learned the parts and labelled them on a diagram, estimated the weight and mass of an orange, an apple and a banana, and then worked in pairs to use a triple beam balance to weigh objects such as a glass stopper, a silver block, a wooden block and a piece of paper. Throughout, the routines were explained, the rules outlined and the work related to the overall unit and to the other subject area (mathematics). Students listened and responded to questions while the introductory part of the lesson progressed, then they worked together in pairs, talked freely and helped each other with the assignments. At the end of the lesson, they put the equipment away and finished up work such as putting their names on the big wall display of their photographs. On another wall, a chart outlined the topics for each of the upcoming lessons, the projects and assignments to be done and the dates for the completion of assignments and tests. As Mary (the teacher of this class) explained, "The mathematics teacher will take the concept of measuring and weighing a bit further and the students will begin to see the links, and then in the science class they say, "Oh, we're doing that in math". Process, routines, consistency of behaviour and care of equipment are reinforced in both subjects and as Bob explained, the activities in the unit are multi-focused:

> These activities often serve two or three purposes including mastery of the Ministry content. Students are also learning leadership skills, group work skills, accountability, responsibility, safety in use of science equipment, and developing their decision making abilities.

The teachers all identified the issue of time as a critical one; time to learn new things, to adapt existing knowledge and strategies, time to deal with the multiplicity of issues arising from teaching such a diverse group of students, time to deal with the disruptive students, time to talk to other teachers about program issues and about students, time to have more contact with the parents and time to develop the interdisciplinary units and classroom resources necessary. The necessity of a common preparation period for all teachers teaching grade nine is seen to be critical and for a "we're all in it together" focus amongst staff.

> Each class presents itself to you and you have to figure out the best way to teach them. The Transition Years Initiative gives students added attention in this big, fast, high school and that is good. You have to learn to look for progress in their ability to listen, to trust, to behave and to learn and to be aware of and to notice the indicators of success. I look for increasing signs that students are coming to class prepared, that they will come in for extra help, that there is improved social behaviour in the classroom, that they will make eye-contact and greet me and others when they arrive and say goodbye as they leave, that there is no violence, vulgarity or racism in the classroom and that they will attend to the work to the best of their ability in spite of non-concern for grades.
>
> Chad.

Working as Collaborative Colleagues.

Each of the three teachers with whom we worked in this study was involved in a simultaneous reconstruction of the self as a classroom teacher, as a team- member on an interdisciplinary team and as a staff member of a school undergoing restructuring. Each was involved as both classroom teacher and as team member within the context of the creation of a school within a school for grade nine students. Individually, each acknowledged the changed environment and clientele, the need for a changed classroom environment and teaching methods and individually they worked these out in their own classrooms. Collectively, they work together to create an environment for grade nine students which will provide the equality of access and outcome for every student envisioned in the school mission statement, and described by the school strategic plan and in the working committees. The teachers acknowledge that they are themselves in transition regarding their abilities to work differently as classroom practitioners, as members of interdisciplinary teams, and as members of a school community going through restructuring where personal and collective values and priorities come together and a balance is sought between them.

The teachers spoke of the replacement of individual autonomy with collective autonomy, of working together and getting to know each other in different ways. They spoke of doing this in many ways, one of which was by collaborating on units which crossed subject boundaries and working together in closer proximity because of this. Within these settings, the balancing of the social and academic aspects of the program often surfaced as an issue for group discussion and conversation and the tensions between the individual and the collective images of schooling were acknowledged. The teachers acknowledged the advantages of being part of a team, of sharing responsibilities, of supporting and being supported, and of working together on a level not previously experienced or known. They speak also of the development of an increased consciousness of self as team-member and collaborator, brought about the growing recognition of the need to work differently and of teaching and learning within a relational (as opposed to an individual) context. Bob argued that a sense of security and belonging for teachers and students would come from the designation of Grade 9 rooms and the development of a Grade 9 identity. Students would see their work displayed on the walls, would feel a sense of ownership and pride in their classrooms and teachers who worked in close proximity to each other would get to know each other in new ways.

> I've run with a cart full of equipment from one room to another here and some years I was up and down stairs and feeling like I was floating on a raft all by myself---isolated. When you are in the same room for half a day, you're out in the hall between periods, you're across the hall from the same person who was across the hall yesterday or the period before and you get to know those people. After a month, you know the kids who should be running past your door at 9:15 am and you know the kids who shouldn't be and you feel more secure, more confident. I think there's a lot of benefit in this.

Within the context of the reconstruction of a school and the creation of a school-within a school, where it is acknowledged that students bring many home, family and social problems into the school, the teachers individually and collectively struggle daily with their doubts and wonderings regarding alternative approaches to teaching and learning and the long-term effectiveness of these approaches. Issues relating to the complexity of collaboration were identified and the levels of risk taking, of trust and of sharing required in being a team-member were new levels being experienced by many. The tensions between the personal and the collective surfaced in the teachers' acknowledgement of their public and professional acceptance of the collective decisions, values and priorities, together with a private questioning and doubting; a doubting which emerged from their own individual experiences, values and images. The teachers wished to be more certain that this approach would be the right one when viewed in the long term, and struggled with the day to day details of balancing the individual and the collective. For one teacher, co-operative learning methods were seen to provide students with the questioning, critical and analytical skills they needed in the present; for another, these methods were seen to be more suited to the later grades, but not appropriate for teaching basic skills to grade nines, and therefore "not being used as much as others would like". Thus the balance of power, control and ownership of the learning process varies from one classroom to another and between individual teachers and the groups of students they teach. Finally, however, it is through the collective planning and designing of curriculum, committee work and sharing in the work of realizing a learning environment of equity for all students, that the teachers are engaging in the discussions and activities which cause them to examine their own values and teaching practices, to question them and to recast them within the larger context being described collectively.

Change By Choice: Exhausting, Exhilarating, or Both ?

For each teacher, the simultaneous recasting of themselves as classroom practitioners, collaborative colleagues within an interdisciplinary team and staff members within an educational community committed to equality of access, opportunity and outcome issues, is a process which is both exhausting and exhilarating. The process of learning to teach in new and different ways in the classroom, of relating to students and to colleagues in new ways and of moving from an independent to an increasingly more interdependent stance is one which requires long term commitment to the collective and common vision. This recasting of the self requires asking new kinds of questions, conscious development of knowledge and skills which will enable the living out of a reconstructed image of self, and setting out on the professional development journey which will support and direct this development. The realities of this kind of growth and transformation require time, energy, resources and long-term commitment.

The Students

While the teachers are struggling to transform themselves, the students are busy re-establishing themselves. Entering secondary school, the students anticipate great changes. They have few specific predictions, know there will be differences, and secretly and intuitively hope for surprises. Socially, they are not disappointed. A new world of friendships and interpersonal adventures opens up to them. They are alternately gregarious and timid about their social opportunities. When they come down from this social cloud however, they discover life on the ground is much the same as their days in elementary school. Here the students get on with the business of adapting to a new 'place' and coping with the recognizable character of and demands in the classroom. The stories of three students in particular, help us to understand the subtleties, complexities; and variations of their grade nine world.

Three Students

Chandra, Allison, and Jordan are the three students we shadowed during our visit to Allendale. They have many common perspectives and experiences. All three students celebrate their fifteenth birthday in 1993. They speak about the size of the school, the crowds, and the movement from class to class. They remember getting lost, forgetting books, and making it to class before the door closed. They work 9 to 3:30, and do not participate in extra-curricular activities. Beneath these commonalities are three students who occupy their own unique space at Allendale.

Jordan was born in Canada and his parents were born in Trinidad and Tobago. He is interested in cars, basketball, and watching television. Jordan describes himself as a good student, but in most courses, he gets by with a minimum passing grade.

Getting into, staying out of, and not backing down from trouble are full-time endeavours for Jordan. In class, he maintains a constant banter with other students and issues a steady flow of questions and unsolicited comments at the teachers. Inevitably, teachers see his behaviour as disruptive and send him to the office. Jordan regularly finds himself in front of a vice principal "pleading his case for the stupidest things". By confronting and escaping trouble with school authorities, Jordan creates a reputation he also seeks with his peers.

Within the student culture, establishing a tough image is critical for survival. He states:

> In this school you have to be tough if you want to stay here. If people see that you are weak, they will keep bothering you, picking on you.
>
> No one can touch me. I'll knock them out. Everyone knows that if they touch me, they've got a death wish.
>
> I have a rep now. People know me. They know I'm not scared of nobody in the school. If someone beats me up, I've got a lot of big friends. Not just small guys, not just grade 10's. These are big men.

Jordan wants it known that people are in for a lot of trouble if they try to give him trouble.

Chandra was born in Guyana and moved to Canada in 1987. She likes to read, watch television, and talk with her friends. Chandra devotes much time and effort to her school work, and usually receives marks in the 70's or higher on most assignments.

Taking things seriously, finding out what teachers want, and behaving in class are the first priorities for Chandra. She explains:

> I study hard for tests. I keep good notes so I can study from them or hand them in for marks. Some teachers check your notebooks. This helps me keep my grades up. I behave in class. Some of them mark you on that.
>
> In English I wasn't doing good in the first half of the semester. But in the second half, like I took my English really serious. But the first half of the term, I got like a 60 to 70 because I didn't really take it serious or like to do my homework or anything. But in the second half of the term, I got a 90 to 95. So I really went up.

Chandra competes with her friends to do well in school. She is sensitive to the demands and responds to the expectations set before her.

Allison was born in Canada and has lived in the community for most of her life. she prefers to spend time with her friends listening to music, dancing, and "hanging around". Allison keeps her marks in the 70's or higher in most subjects, but did slip to 50's and 60's in the last half of the second semester.

Getting the work done, staying in the background, and beating back boredom are all part of how Allison copes with school. At first, she was "scared of everything" but quickly got used to the school and requirements in each course. She complains about the monotony and repetition of classroom life and, almost without notice, develops a wide range of social strategies to get her through the routines of the day.

Themes in Practice

Getting Used to the 'Place'

The unknown for these 'niners' is the degree to which the secondary school is a different place from their respective elementary schools. The secondary school is a physically larger space, with more specialized rooms—for art, family studies, business, technological studies, and science—and a greater range of resources and services. There are more passages along which to travel and more crowds through which to push. The academic program requires more courses and the extracurricular program offers more activities and both provide more choices. Coming in, the students anticipate that the secondary school will be a different place, harder, faster, and with more possibilities.

Specific to Allendale, the students enter with a worry about their safety and well-being. The word in the community is that violence, drugs, and disruptions are commonplace at Allendale. Only the tough will survive. In addition to adapting to the pace, size, and expectations of the secondary school, the students are on the watch for any evidence which confirms, modifies, or rejects the enduring reputation of Allendale.

The immediate challenges overwhelm any concerns about the school. In their search for the best route to get to class on time, the students find paths which friends from other classes might take. They learn that when music is played over the loudspeaker in the morning, they have five minutes to get to their first class. They discover which teachers monitor the prompt arrival at class and which passages have the greatest number of teachers on patrol. They determine meeting spots between class changes—locker areas, key junctions in the halls, and wayside locations outside particular offices or display cases—and preferred tables in the lunchroom. Very quickly, the students get good at negotiating traffic, working within the norms of movement, and managing space.

Most students take very little time to adapt to the plant, to know their way around, and to develop a routine for and a rhythm to each day. Once inside, the students find that Allendale is "normal", "not as bad as the rumours say", or "a good school". Their fears of the unknown and worries about the reputation of the school are answered by a few weeks in the place. As their lives in the corridor get in order, the students increasingly turn their attention to life in the classroom.

Re-Establishing Preferred Ways of Working

At the outset, the students predict that secondary school courses will make more rigorous and distinct requirements on what and how they learn. The students however, soon realize that they can act and interact in secondary school classrooms in ways similar to their previous practices in the elementary school. Specifically, they re-establish three patterns of coping: building a student-to-student network, determining priorities, and balancing teacher demands and social needs.

(i) Building a Student-to-Student Network. The students rely on each other to navigate through the challenges and the terrain of classroom life. Initially, they swap stories about what their siblings, parents, and older friends have told them about the school. They exchange information and tips about how to find rooms, where to meet friends, and what to avoid in the halls. They compare notes about teachers and exchange anecdotes about classroom pranks, blunders, and critical incidents. In the midst of classroom tasks and assignments, they determine which students might be mentors, allies, or friends. This informal network helps the students adapt to their new environment. And many are adept networkers who rely on their connections to succeed in school.

(ii) Determining Priorities. The students try to sort out what work is most important for them to do. They recognize their obligation to do whatever the teacher says but vary in how they determine what matters and to what degree it matters. Chandra, Allison, and Jordan approach this determination from quite different vantage points.

For Chandra, getting higher marks comes from understanding and responding to what teachers want. "I listen to the teachers, I do as they ask. I try to do my homework and try to do what's right... If I don't understand something, I ask the teacher for help. They help you and I get a boost up". What matters is what counts, and what counts is what teachers say the students have to do. Chandra takes her cues from the teachers and their assessment of what she has to do, what she can do if she wants, and what she does not have to do.

Allison is sensitive not only to priorities that teachers set but also to the extent that the implementation of these priorities promotes learning. She is happy to comply if the work is fun and not boring. Repetition, excessive teacher talk, and copying or memorizing information are not what Allison considers learning.

> If you just write it down, you don't learn. But if you do it, you learn because you remember what you did. Reading? You don't learn by reading. You have to do it yourself. If the teacher keeps talking and talking, it gets boring after a while; you stop listening and you don't learn.

Allison finds these more traditional teacher-directed approaches necessary to endure, relevant to her success in school, but unimportant for her learning.

What matters to Jordan are those things over which he has some influence, if not control. Like Allison, he resents boring experiences, but unlike her, is also prepared to resist and on occasion, to change the situation. His stance is reflected in the following excerpts:

> I wouldn't do no surprise Mickey Mouse tests [in reaction to another student's complaint that a teacher gives simple tests without advanced notice].

> If you don't want to work, you tell him you don't want to work. Teachers can't do anything about it. People don't feel like working everyday.

> I told the teacher that home is a place where you do whatever you want. If you do your work at school, then they want to give you more. What for? Then your parents say you can't go outside. I don't think so. They call the house and say I have to do homework. But any time my mother says to do my homework, one day I do it and then she never sees it again. It doesn't matter. She always asks me about it. I say I don't have any. She doesn't care—she says it's my choice.

When Jordan perceives that an action by a teacher affronts or disadvantages him, he opposes the move regardless of the consequences. In these circumstances, his right of self-determination is the only priority.

(iii) Balancing Teacher Demands and Social Needs. The students keep both agendas in focus, simultaneously attending to the work set by teachers and the need to maintain and extend their circle of friends. The following account is taken from our fieldnotes. It summarizes a ten minute segment during a science class where Allison is working with two other girls on an activity which requires heating a beacon of water and taking regular temperature readings until five minutes after the water reaches the boiling point.

> Allison is the manager of her group watching the time, instructing Charlene about regulating the heat from the Bunsen burner, and recording the temperature at prescribed intervals. She also advises the three girls beside them when their group expresses some confusion about the task. During the exercise, Anne sits on the desk across from Allison and initially engages her in an animated conversation about this 6′ 1″ guy she knows and later about the Mike Tyson rape case. Periodically, Allison calls "time", and Charlene reads the thermometer and announces the temperature for Allison to record. Allison maintains verbal contact with Anne while glancing at Charlene to check that she is following the procedures correctly. At one point, she steps down from the desk to take the temperature herself. During these exchanges, Allison monitors the movements of the teacher as he strolls from group to group. At strategic moments, Allison pauses from her conversation with Anne and supervision of Charlene (and the group beside her) to make faces at a group of boys on the other side

> of the room. Between temperature readings, she makes two quick trips around the room, stopping briefly to trade criticisms with the boys about their mishandling of the science activity, accusing them of creating the foul smell, or teasing them about their appearance. She does not miss a reading and only temporarily interrupts her conversation with Anne ...

The above snapshot illustrates how Allison makes the work, social and the social, work. In the early months however, the students tilt the balance towards their social needs. When they have set up their social location in each classroom— where they sit, when they can talk and with whom — and can predict the pattern of and opportunities for interaction, then they can give more time and energy to their work.

Students devote considerable time to finding, protecting, and pushing the boundaries of their social space. The secondary school offers the first significant break from the social circles in which they have been through most of their years in the elementary school. Some are timid, preferring to cling to friends from before, but each class and each walk down the hall present new opportunities to expand their social horizons by making new friends. Seemingly straightforward exchanges about directions, class work, or borrowing materials are the beginning explorations into new friendships. Side glances, quick barbs and clumsy overtures are meaningful moments in the rapidly changing social world of the 'niners'.

In the brief five minutes between classes, Jordan can connect in one form or another with ten or more students. Our fieldnotes record the following sequence of contacts as Jordan travels from his science classroom on the second floor to his mathematics classroom on the first floor:

> As Jordan leaves the room he punches one boy in the arm and sticks out his foot to trip another boy who is walking down the hall. In both instances, he laughs and gestures jokingly with his fist as if to say, "Want to make anything out of it?". He weaves from side to side as he walks down the hall bouncing off the lockers and into groups of girls, who attempt in vain (Jordan dodges and ducks) to slap him for his bump. At the top of the stairs, he spots someone he knows further down the hall and consequently runs to meet him. He grabs his friends arm and his friend, in turn, spins out of Jordan's grasp. They each grab each other's shoulders and use chest butts to push one another to opposite sides of the hall. They are alternately teasing, threatening, questioning ("Where are you going to be at lunch?"), and

> laughing as they wrestle and push. A teacher walks by and tells them to get to class. Both say, 'Yes, sir' and gesture with a finger as the teacher passes.
>
> Jordan runs back to the stairways knocking books out of two girls' hands as he passes by them. He leaps down two or three steps at a time, brushing a half dozen students as he goes. At the bottom, he meets two other students he knows. He pauses momentarily and whispers something to one and waves at the other as he enters the hallway.
>
> He starts in one direction down the hall, stops and passes me when he reverses his path. He says to me, "I have to get a book" and then begins to run towards a locker area. On the way, he peeks into two rooms and yells at particular students who turn and respond to his comment. The teachers in both rooms tell Jordan to leave. Once at the lockers, he engages two groups of girls in conversation as he opens his locker. One group ignores his comments, while one girl in the other group calls him an idiot and slaps him on the back. Jordan feigns injury and calls to me, "Sir, you saw it. She hit me. Abuse". Before any of us can react further, Jordan is scurrying off down the hall.
>
> By this time, few students are left in the halls. Teachers are closing the doors and Jordan is at last, running straight down the hall to the mathematics room. I try to keep up, losing him at one turn, but arriving at the room only seconds after him. As I enter, Jordan is explaining to the teacher that he had to get his book. He notices my arrival and adds, "Ask him".

For many, stressing the social is not done at the sacrifice of their academic responsibilities. The students soon discover that classroom norms and activities follow a recognizable pattern to those they remember from grades 7 and 8. Furthermore, they see the work as a review of the past, a reconstructed look at the already known, or a simplified extension of previously travelled ground. With these perceptions, a reduction of attention to teacher demands does not have any serious consequences for their performance.

Proven tactics prevail. And each successful tactic gives the students more room to manoeuvre socially. They are busy both doing the work and being seen to be busy with the work. They are quiet about knowing the work and noisy about needing more time to do the work. They deny the need for teacher assistance but insist on the right to seek help from their peers. They argue that working with others is an antidote to boredom and keeps them *on* and not *off* task. Each successful tactic gives the students more room to manoeuvre socially. Jordan applies these tactics in ways that get him into trouble while Allison and Chandra are more subtle in their tactics and consequently, stay out of trouble. Misbehaviour gives Jordan the social position he desires. It allows him to voice his resistance to those aspects of school which limit his peers contacts; it allows him to achieve some group consensus and control over his teachers' activities; it provides some fun in an otherwise stifling environment; and, above all, it allows him to deflect public embarrassment when confronted by unacceptable challenges and directions. By "stage managing"[1] his own misbehaviour, Jordan keeps his social needs in the forefront and his self image untarnished and intact.

As good students, Allison and Chandra have an investment in a more covert balance between teacher demands and social needs. In their reluctance to be seen as good students, they consider and try to respond equitably to their teachers' views ("Will I pass if the teacher thinks I am not a good student?"), peer responses ("Will they think I am a nerd if I am a good student?"), their own view of themselves ("Am I a good student?"), and the role of school in their futures ("Do I need to pass? With what level of performance?"). Mindful of their social positions, Allison and Chandra "stage manage" their behaviour so that their achievement seems effortless and without undue and public displays of pleasing their teachers.

After the initial confusion and concern about moving to a new school subsides, the students face the increasingly familiar signposts of what teachers and schools do and the increasingly unfamiliar—for some overwhelming, for others intriguing, and for all consuming—need to redefine and make new relationships in the still-not-understood social realities of Allendale. In transition, they can dabble in the old and the new, being the students they have always been in the classroom and reaching out to a different and more social image of the kind of person they might want to be in the classrooms and corridors of a secondary school.

Teachers and Students in Transition

In the last section, we moved further and further away from the Transition Years' initiatives and closer to the transitional experiences of students, the focus of the initiatives in the first place. The students do not talk about the initiatives unless prompted to do so. Then they offer succinct recollections of and observations about such happenings as:

- talks from Allendale representatives during their visits to the various elementary schools;
- organized tours and, in some instances, classes (e.g. computers) at Allendale for grade 8 students;
- advice on course selections by Allendale counsellors;
- Positive Peer Culture, a program where students help other students in trouble;
- links between subjects such as mathematics and science; and
- destreamed classes.

For the most part, the students see the above actions as typical of what teachers and schools do and as such, are not forthcoming about mentioning these routine activities and behaviours.

In contrast, the teachers are immersed in the Transition Years' initiatives. They have spent many hours in committees restructuring their work. They continue to discuss and debate their efforts, wondering what else they could do, how far they should go, and what impact their changes will have. As time passes, some of the teachers call for bold changes while others argue that doing a better job with present approaches is enough.

Both groups are in transition, with the teachers grappling with how best to change their teaching and their programs and the students adapting to the changing social realities of a new culture in a new place. They share the stage in the foreground of a play which they ultimately script together, neither sure of the extent to which the other can and should influence the role they have chosen to play.

Where Next?

The spotlight of change is shifting from the backroom (improving the structure for the management of change - the work of administrators and teachers) to the classroom (altering teaching and program approaches - the work of teachers and students). The next phase will be less about re-organization and planning and more about collaborative work among teachers and between teachers and students. In this crucial transition, all participants will have to examine the nature and outcome of their reform practices.

In The Backroom

The Transition Years' initiatives are but one part of a larger scheme to transform the culture of the school. Allendale has persistently sought to build a foundation for a fundamental re-direction in how the school makes its contribution to the community to which it belongs. There are numerous indicators of change in the backroom. For example, the school has altered the administrative structure, appointed teachers to leadership positions, broadened the participation of teachers in decision-making, and provided resources for professional development. In future months, the protagonists in the backroom will have to address three questions:

1. To what extent do the Transition Years' initiatives support the mission of the school?

   Both the grade 9 initiatives and the school mission will evolve preferably as a result of the mutual influence and constraint between the two forces.

2. How will the grade 9 (and later 10) team work with the rest of the school?

   As the grade 9 group evolves into an interdisciplinary team, it will become a separate and integrated unit and out of step with traditional departmental patterns. It will have to establish a flexible structure to avoid the problems of a school with two cultures operating under one roof.

3. How will the plans and structures provide for diverse and expanded forms of support?

   Translating plans into effective classroom practices will require time for teachers to meet, to work in each other's classrooms, to experiment with innovative approaches, and to engage in ongoing professional development. The time taken and resources used to get to this point are minimal compared to the resources, time, and commitment required to support these significant changes in classroom practices in the secondary school.

In The Classroom

We observed a variety of changes in classroom practice. The teachers are articulate about their plans for further changes and cautious and reflective about moving in these directions. As the teachers continue their work in teams, they will encounter peer resistance, pressure, and support for their work in classrooms. They will also need to focus on ways to include their students in the process of creating a curriculum where student and teacher agendas come together.

The basic question, "How will the teachers let the students in on the changes?" will require the teachers to respond to three questions:

1. How will the teachers reconcile their commitment to change and the tendency of students to preserve their classroom practices?

   The students have come to know a particular routine of how classrooms work and, despite some criticisms of these traditions, want these enduring norms to continue. They can predict expectations and anticipate relationships. When teachers try to change these patterns, they will have to help students work through their doubts and resistance.

2. How will the teachers and students find a common ground from which to initiate changes?

   Many commonalities already exist between teachers and students who are the primary stakeholders in the classroom and who share responsibility for what transpires each day. They have similar views on learning. Both advocate more interactive, varied, and experiential strategies. They both try to establish and overcome routines, often coping through adept polysynchronous acts (doing many things at the same time). Each is seeking an environment where they can be themselves. The challenge will be to see past those differences which separate them and find those qualities that bind them together.

3. How will the teachers harness the knowledge and experiences of the students to bring about change?

   Students do not arrive in grade 9 as blank, incomplete, or incorrectly programmed 'slates'. They are knowing students, wise in the ways of schooling, honest in their analysis of teaching, and perceptive in their judgements about life. The teachers will have no need to start from scratch but instead will have to learn how to scratch beyond the surface, listening to their views, teaching them about new ways of learning about themselves and each other, and engaging them directly as partners in change.

Inquiring Into the Changes Ahead

This case study is a snapshot of a project that is already beyond the portrait represented on these pages. It gives a glimpse of the realities of implementation as seen through the eyes and experiences of some key teachers and administrators. It provides some insights into the perspectives of a few teachers and the students, but it stops short of describing change in the classroom.

The Transition Years initiatives have not permeated the classrooms on a wide or indepth scale as yet. At Allendale, it is too early for this and thus inappropriate to evaluate on this basis. The primary evaluators, the teachers and the students, will have to take up the next phase of inquiry. Their challenge will be to study and critique the quality of changed practices in their classrooms and to assess the impact of these changes on the desired culture and structures of their school.

NOTES

1. Rosanna Tite reviewed the notion of "stage-management" in an unpublished 1991 paper entitled, Children's *Perspectives of School. A Summary of Some Impressions from the Literature.* Stage-management refers to coping strategies students use to maintain some control over how they publicly represent themselves and are perceived by others, especially their peers.

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4.

LINCOLN SECONDARY SCHOOL: A NEWLY ESTABLISHED, RESTRUCTURED SCHOOL

By

Andy Hargreaves, Ilda Januario and Robert Macmillan

Context

Lincoln Secondary School along with two other schools in its board is involved as one of the pilot projects funded by the Ontario Ministry of Education and Training to undertake innovations in The Transition Years. When the pilot projects scheme was first announced, the school board responsible for Lincoln Secondary was already in the process of building schools to accommodate an increase in its student population. Lincoln was designed to take advantage of the government's pilot project incentives by incorporating Transition Years initiatives into the school's organization and philosophy.

Shortly after the announcement that a new school would be built, an experienced local principal was appointed to coordinate all aspects of the school's establishment leading up to its opening in September of 1990. He was also expected to administer the school in the first years of its operation. His mandate included translating the policy and philosophy of Transition Years innovations into practice.

Once the principal developed his own sense of what would be involved, he hired the department heads who then helped select the remaining teaching staff. When these positions were advertised and the teachers heard about the philosophical foundation for the new school's programs, over 200 people applied for the various department headships. Teachers were selected for these positions according to their demonstrated leadership skills, expertise in their own field, and a strong interest in the student-centred philosophy implied by destreaming and other Transition Years changes. Once the department headships were filled, the remaining staff were selected from an even larger pool of applicants than the one used for selecting the heads.

In 1990-91 the staff consisted of 34 teachers and department heads. At this time, the school accommodated grade 9 and 10 students only — with approximately 230 students in each grade. With the addition of grade 11 in 1991-92, the staff was increased by a further 17. The recruiting patterns for this latter group were more diverse. Some experienced teachers, we were told, were attracted to the school for philosophical reasons; some new teachers were drawn from the board "pool"; and some teachers were transferred in from schools undergoing closure or reorganization.

Most of Lincoln's original 34 teachers and department heads cited their interest in the school's philosophy and the need for a new challenge as their main reasons for coming to Lincoln Secondary. They were enthusiastic about being involved in establishing a new school and about having the opportunity to translate student-centred philosophies into practice. As one person said: "I don't think you would have come to this school if you didn't think that there was a lot to be gained from destreaming." Teachers would be involved in creating a new school, and in creating new versions of practice in that school. These were the twin attractions of Lincoln Secondary for them.

Involvement in this creative combination generated strong senses of purpose and excitement among the teachers. The stringent selection process also made staff feel privileged to be part of the elite group of teachers at Lincoln. As one teacher said:

> We all are terrific teachers and we had been told all kinds of times by people, not only here but in the board, that the best of the best have been chosen for this school. You know, "You people are sort of the rising suns."

The school's students come mainly from the rapidly growing middle to high-middle income housing developments in the area, situated on the edge of a large metropolitan area. Few students are from lower socioeconomic status families, although the staff commented on the growing proportion of visible minorities among the student body in the 1992-1993 school year.

At the heart of Lincoln's Transition Years Pilot Project, and indeed at the heart of Lincoln's establishment itself, is the creation of a reorganized structure for the Grade 9 year. This comprises three central components.

1. A Destreamed Cohort System

This system applies to Grade 9 only and is designed to ease the transition from elementary to secondary school. Grade 9 is divided into three cohorts of destreamed students. Each cohort is made up of four destreamed classes. Students spend most time together in their classes — especially during "Core subjects", i.e. mathematics, English, social studies, science, French and physical and health education, the (latter being taught in single sex groups). This system has been designed to create mixed ability classes, keep students together as a cohesive and supportive social group, and reduce the number of contacts between different teachers and students. Students are also exposed to each of what are termed the "exploratory subjects" i.e., visual arts, dramatic arts, music, family studies and technological education. Initially, each of these subjects was assigned eleven periods. The rationale for this system is to expose all students to all these subjects in order to provide a more informed basis for subject choices later. The whole program runs on a Day 1/Day 2, alternate system throughout the year. In each cohort, teachers meet at least twice a year to discuss the progress of each student and to coordinate curriculum.

2. Redesigned Student Evaluation System

This has been created to provide students and parents with more specific, extended and continuous feedback on progress. The system uses neither letter grades nor percentages. It assesses a wide range of skills, knowledge and behaviour in domains that include but also extend considerably beyond the conventional assessments based on traditional academic performance. Immense effort has been invested in developing and continuously modifying these innovative patterns of student evaluation.

3. A Mentor System

This has been established to provide all incoming students with the opportunity and the right to have contact with an individual teacher who is responsible for their welfare in school, and who is available as a source of help and guidance on an ongoing basis. The mentor program is compulsory for students in Grade 9, and, an optional service for those who require it, Grade 10.

Conceptualizing the Issues

This case study offers important, indeed exceptional opportunities to examine issues of both *change substance* and *change process* in the development and implementation of Transition Years initiatives.

Change Substance

Lincoln Secondary school offers opportunities to study creative approaches to several Transition Years components including:

- alternative forms of student grouping in terms of destreaming
- alternative patterns of school organization in the form of the cohort system
- alternative systems of guidance and counselling in the form of the parallel mentor system

- alternative systems of student evaluation.

With the simultaneous introduction of these very substantial changes, the case of Lincoln Secondary School also offers an excellent opportunity to examine within one setting the impact of several Transition Years initiatives as an integrated system.

Change Process

This site has also enabled the project team to address and examine key issues of *change process* as they apply to newly established, radically restructured 'lighthouse' schools. These include:

- the process of creation and establishment compared to the process of change
- the innovation's potential generalizability and transposability to other settings, either in whole or in part
- the issues that are and will be encountered in sustaining such an innovative setting over time
- the nature and place of vision and educational leadership in "lighthouse" settings
- the nature and consequences of complex, multiple innovations of broad scope
- the relationship of rapid and radical educational change to teachers' working lives
- the management of and interrelationships between structure and culture as components of the change process
- the needs for staff development and inservice training in innovative "lighthouse" settings
- the relationship of 'lighthouse' schools to other parts of the system.

Methods

Data have been collected from Lincoln Secondary School mainly on two occasions — at the end of the 1990-91 school year and in the spring term of 1992. At the end of the 1990-91 year, interviews were conducted with the principal and with teachers involved in the Grade 9 program who taught English, mathematics, social studies, French, family studies, technological studies, guidance and special needs. A 'focus group' interview was also conducted with a group of teachers involved in teaching the exploratory subjects (i.e., visual arts, dramatic arts, music, etc.). Nine teachers were interviewed individually between one and two-and-a-half hours each. Teachers were chosen at random from the available list of teachers teaching the Grade 9 program.

The semi-structured schedule focused on the establishment of the school, the initiatives it was trying to implement, the backgrounds of teachers who had come to the school, their working relations with their colleagues, and their perspectives and practices in relation to teaching strategies, curriculum and the Transition Years' initiatives. Interviews ran from one-and-a-half to over two hours in length and were tape recorded. Subsequently, the tapes were transcribed in order to identify emergent themes and issues. The major concern of this first phase of this study was with issues of change process; with how the culture and organization of this school (along with seven others) affected how teachers interpreted and responded to educational change, particularly in the form of the provincially mandated change of destreaming. The analysis of change process issues at Lincoln at that time is recorded in full in *Secondary School Work Cultutres and Educational Change* (Hargreaves, et al., 1992). Summaries and extracts of the analyses included in that 1992 study are also reviewed here for the sake of continuity and completeness.

The second phase of the research was carried out in the early months of 1992. Whereas the first phase had involved only two investigators, the second, more intensive phase involved a team of nine researchers working under the direction and coordination of one of the Principal Investigators who was also an active member of the team.

With just one exception (a teacher very recently returned from maternity leave whose interview was therefore complemented, not replaced, by another teacher in the same subject, who had directly experienced the school changes in recent months), the teacher sample was the same as in the first phase of the research. A repeat interview was also conducted with the principal. Each teacher was observed by a research team member for one full day — within their classrooms and outside them – which included the teaching of at least one Grade 9 class in each case. Observations were recorded in detailed fieldnotes which were organized and rewritten at the end of each day in a form more accessible to interpretation. Observers focused primarily on *the teacher* and those with whom the teacher interacted, but tried also to be watchful of the wider context of classroom interactions as they did this.

At the end of the observation, teachers were interviewed about their reflections on and perceptions of the day's events, about the changes and developments they had perceived since Phase 1 of the study, and about the *change substance* of the pilot project initiative, i.e. cohort groups, destreaming, the evaluation system and the mentor program. This process helped ground teachers' statements in observations of their actual practice. It helped make these observations less general and more concrete; more engaged with the daily realities as well as with the broad philosophy of restructuring. Teachers were also interviewed in three separate focus groups about change substance and change process issues. This helped us cross-validate initial interpretations of our data and deepened discussion in a number of areas through mutual probing and clarification. All focus group interviews were conducted by two interviewers — one acting as interviewer/chair and one acting as recorder. The interviews were also tape recorded and fully transcribed for analysis. Both the individual and focus group interviews with teachers were also directed at eliciting teachers' perceptions of any changes that had taken place since the first round of data collection in 1991, including changes in the change process itself.

In Phase 2, interviews and observations were also conducted with a sample of 12 Grade 9 students. These students were selected to represent ethnic and gender mix, to include membership of all three Grade 9 cohorts in reasonably equal proportions, and to include students of "regular" academic standing (8 in all), students designated as "enhanced" (2), and students formally identified as having learning or behavioural disabilities (2).

Each student was observed by a researcher for one full day. In these instances, observers concentrated their attention on the individual students concerned, with other classroom considerations being more in the background of observational priorities.

Observers sought to adopt unobtrusive positions in class — close to but not immediately next to the observed student in each case. All students and their parents gave consent to be observed and interviewed. Before the commencement of the day of observation, each student was briefed by their observer about the purpose of the exercise, and about what the observer would be doing. At the end of the day, interviews of approximately 20 minutes were conducted with each student, seeking reflections on and explanations of particular parts of the day, as well as the student's perceptions of the school, of Grade 9, and of the nature of its organization and program more generally.

As with teachers, pairs of researchers also conducted focus group interviews with students, again to improve cross-validation of responses and to deepen discussion around particular issues. These interviews were tape recorded and transcribed.

Methodologically, it is important to emphasize that this study, like all our case studies, is a snapshot. It is not a longitudinal study. Snapshots can provide portraits of people and places at one point in time. By the time snapshots have been developed and printed, places have changed and, in both geographical and psychological terms, people have moved on. Indeed, some members of the school's staff (particularly some of those in more senior positions), have been keen to stress that the school has already changed from the time we collected our data, and that many of our findings, though they accurately describe the school as it was, would no longer hold true in the present.

Such discussions serve to remind us of the prime function of multi-site case studies. Their purpose is not to evaluate particular schools and the people within them. It is to describe the challenges they face, the issues they encounter at particular points of their development, in ways that might help other people learn from the experiences of those within the case. Case studies provide rich, detailed data that make educational issues come alive in real places with real people and better enable readers of research to engage with the issues in ways that are concrete, practical and meaningful to them. They also often bring to the surface the personal doubts, uncertainties, conflicts and complexities that make up the realities of most organizational life but which more quantitative approaches do not uncover so easily. Qualitative research trades heavily on people's trust, honesty and openness. Where some of the findings about an organization are critical, as is often the case in qualitative research (for perfection in organizations is a scarce commodity), we would advise anyone who recognizes the school concerned and is able to steal behind its cloak of anonymity, not to use the findings of research to criticize particular individuals within that school, or to be destructively critical of the school in general. This is not just an issue bearing on the proper uses of research, it is also a practical issue; for this school, like all the others in our sample, will inevitably have changed in important respe[illegible] from the time when we studied it.

Interpretation and Representation

The analysis of the transcripts and classroom observation notes has yielded an impressive and expansive array of rich data and information on the nature and progress of the pilot project at Lincoln Secondary School: far too much indeed to include in a single chapter. In order to be selective, we have therefore drawn most directly on interview data from students, teachers and administrators which we collected in Phase 2 of our study, and which contribute to our analysis of both change *substance* and change *process*. We have provided less direct substantiation of our analysis of change process issues in the earliest period of the school's establishment. These are fully documented in our earlier report of *Secondary School Work Cultures and Educational Change : with particular reference to destreaming* (Hargreaves *et al.*, 1992) which readers are advised to consult. Summaries only of the earlier phase of analysis are usually provided here. We have also not drawn heavily on observational data in this chapter but some of these are discussed more extensively in Chapter 2.

As in our other case studies, our approach to analyzing the data is a broadly interpretive one, directed towards identifying, eliciting, understanding and representing the multiple, varying and sometimes conflicting perspectives that different participants have concerning the schools and classrooms in which they live, learn and work together. The administrator's world is often different from the teacher's one; the teacher's world different from the student's. Nor do all teachers and all students see their schools and classrooms in exactly the same way. This is not a question of true accounts and false accounts, still less of honest compared to dishonest ones. It is just that school, teaching, or change looks very different, depending on the angle from which one views it. Our purpose in this study has been to get behind the rhetoric of change to the realities, for it is in these realities of classroom life that change ultimately counts. What is clear from our observations is that even when teachers and students are in the very same classroom, these realities can sometimes be experienced as strikingly different. Qualitative research offers an opportunity to give the voices of different participants in schooling a hearing; to bring them together in the same place; and to provide some grounds for their resolution. Let us now hear some of these voices and what they have to say about change substance and change process issues as they affect Grade 9.

Change Substance

Our analysis begins by describing key components of the Transition Years initiatives on which Lincoln Secondary School has been concentrating. These are *school organization* in the shape of destreaming and the cohort system; *student evaluation;* and changes in *student services* and support in terms of the mentor system.

1. Destreaming

Destreaming is a central feature of Lincoln's organization and of the principal's philosophy in conceptualizing and establishing the school. A convert to destreaming, having practised and supported streaming for many years in other secondary school settings, the principal sees it as an excellent opportunity to establish greater educational equity and to improve the quality of instruction for all students.

At present, destreaming at Lincoln is confined to Grade 9, with Grade 10 again being differentiated into different levels of course offerings. However, the existence of the destreamed Grade 9 program means that most of Lincoln's teachers have contact not just with the rhetoric of destreaming, but also with the reality. Our main findings on destreaming at Lincoln Secondary are:

Support for Destreaming

Most teachers are supportive of destreaming. They came to the school because they believed in it and, despite the challenges and difficulties, still feel that it is worthwhile and that either it is effective or can be so. Of all the innovations being undertaken at Lincoln Secondary, it is the one on which teachers are most broadly agreed and united, even though this is not absolutely unanimous. Data supporting this interpretation are reported in *Secondary School Work Cultures and Educational Change* (Hargreaves *et al.*, 1992).

With only one or two exceptions, teachers feel that destreaming generally benefits students, especially those at the lower end of the ability and achievement range. This happens, they feel, because of the visible role models and standards supplied by these students' higher achieving peers, against which expectations for performance are judged. These views are well supported by the research literature on destreaming (summarized in Oakes, 1985).

One teacher said that one of the benefits of destreaming is that it improves the behaviour of students who would otherwise be in low and general level classes, and gives them more self-esteem:

> One of the things that the kids are learning in the destreamed class is a nice sort of social parameters. You know, we've all taught Grade 9 general classes and that Grade 10 general class from Hell and survived them! And we have a few battle scars... So, in some ways, we may be letting them down and not challenging them enough. But we are giving them something else in their place.
>
> One thing I find about those kids (now in destreamed classes) is there isn't the attitude that "I'm stupid and I can't do it." There isn't that loser mentality.

Another teacher remarked:

> I think basically, you are dealing with all levels of ability and for students of lower level ability or interest, or whatever, they perhaps are gaining that role model from students who are able to focus and complete their work and achieve high marks. It gives them something to see on the other side, as opposed to putting them all together and having them just muddle along as a group. So they have some role model there.

Subject Variations

Destreaming receives some of the strongest support in the 'exploratory' subjects, where it is not perceived as a problem since those subjects are process-oriented (providing experiences of what the subjects have to offer) rather than specifically skills oriented (requiring mastery of designated competences) in Grade 9. It also receives strong support for social sciences and for English. Destreaming is seen as more difficult to implement in subjects with cumulative content and skills like math, French, and to some extent science, where uneven ability could be a source of strain and demotivation for teachers and students alike. One teacher whom we encountered during our observation of students apologized for his lesson in a destreamed context. He argued that science, math and language (one of which he was teaching) required separate arrangements. "Taking a wholesale approach to destreaming is not a good idea", he said. "It is catering to the norm; leaving advanced students unmotivated." "Destreamed, low-end students", he continued, "are motivated the first six months because they can see what others can do, but then they become demotivated because they can't keep up." Another teacher commented,

> I think it's much more difficult to do mathematics in a destreamed class because they think you're asking kids to consider things that would never ever be considered in many classrooms whether they were advanced or general. They are asking kids to think about "what are we really doing in here?" And that takes a risk.

Difficulties in recruiting teachers who are committed to destreaming, may cause problems in particular subject areas. A teacher in one of the three subjects mentioned above said,

> I didn't come to this school, I must admit, for the destreaming. Change doesn't come as fast as I would like. I don't feel on a day to day level that I have satisfied my personal philosophy of teaching, so it's very depressing a lot of times.

In general, however, even in those subjects thought most difficult to destream, there was no unilateral opposition to destreaming. In this sense, destreaming was widely, if not exclusively viewed as an active and realizable possibility in all areas of the curriculum. Even so, this setting, where there is strong support for destreaming nevertheless reveals that teachers in some subjects (those often regarded as somewhat more "linear" in nature), feel especially vulnerable to the challenges which mixed-ability teaching presents. Inservice training in mixed-ability teaching strategies may therefore be a particular priority for these subjects, as will shrewd decisions about what kinds of teachers to recruit for and allocate to Grade 9 programs in these subjects.

Desires for Flexibility

A small proportion of teachers would prefer not to have "full-blown" destreaming, substituting it either with temporary streaming within Grade 9 for a few weeks, or within certain unidentified periods throughout the year. However, more than these few had at least some reservations about destreaming being applied uniformly and inflexibly to all students, at all times.

> To de-stream: does that mean you can never stream students at any time. And I don't know the answer to that. I think you work out what is best for the kid and forget about what the philosophy says. And if sometimes in your math curriculum or French curriculum it's better to stream students for a couple of weeks, let's try it and see what happens. Does that not give the students a jumping off point for when they are streamed? Well, these were talked about at this last retreat and we're forming committees to look at them.

Even the principal had reservations on this issue.

> I guess the real question is: Can you honestly have potentially vocational kids and deemed gifted kids in the same groups and honestly challenge them all? In fact, the parameters might have to be narrowed down and that might mean re-grouping the kids but right now we are still wrestling with keeping them all together. Somewhere down the line that might have to be addressed and I don't know. Even two years isn't enough!

He contemplated the future possibility of at least partial streaming.

> You can knock two days out and say these are remedial days... We could also do that at the upper end. We are not streaming it yet but you want to explore some more difficult areas in English or math and get them out of this [ability] mix for 2-3 days a week, who knows...

One important implication here, it seems, is that even in one of the schools in the province that is most positively involved towards destreaming, teachers still appear to be searching for interpretations of destreaming that leave some room for flexibility in how it is implemented.

Destreaming or Semi-streaming? – Special Needs and Other Issues

One or two teachers (but only one or two) alluded to destreaming as "catering to the lowest common denominator" or as making "mediocrity the focus". As one teacher remarked, "one disadvantage that I didn't get a chance to mention was the advanced students, I think, are not challenged enough". Meeting the needs of the "enhanced" students is widely acknowledged as a particular problem. Consequently, part of the push for flexibility arises from the perceived needs of these high ability students.

Indeed, one of the discussion themes at a staff retreat was "how to challenge the top student".

One of the school's organizational responses to this problem has been to concentrate designated "enhanced" students in some cohorts, and designated students with learning or other disabilities in different ones — so that no cohort contains the entire range of ability. This is partly for organizational convenience, to allow the 'gifted consultant' to work with one cohort, and the special education resource teacher with another. Focus group discussions among teachers display vigorous, excited yet collectively inconclusive debates about whether this arrangement truly constitutes destreaming or not, and whether indeed that matters.

One teacher was critical of the practice of different ability students not being distributed uniformly among the three cohorts. This constituted streaming, he felt.

> The kids have already been streamed, they are LDed or Gifted — they're Mode 1, 2 and 3 at the elementary — and when they come here, even we, put all the gifted students in one cohort and we put the other ones in the other two cohorts, so we've already streamed them... We are creating an elite society right here by identifying [students in] Grade 7 and 8 and then we're putting them right back into regular society, if you will, in Grade 9, and then, next year, they are going to go and take specific gifted classes... Why did we feel the need to identify them in the first place? If we're saying with destreaming that we do not want to identify them and give them more time to determine what they want to do with their own life, here we are, and we have two groups of students at either end and they've already been identified for us.

A corollary of this uneven distribution of ability across the cohorts is that some grade 9 classes are more "advanced" and better behaved than others. Teachers know very well who these classes are:

> Grade 9Y is definitely a majority of advanced, enchanting children. Grade 9W unfortunately is a good bag of two poles [of ability]... But if I was a parent and I knew of the disparity between 9Y and 9W, I'd fight like hell to get my kid into 9Y.

Students too, it seems, have their own sense of differences between classes.

> I: How does your class compare to the other? Because there's three classes in Grade 9 aren't there — three groups: 9M, 9L and what are the other ones? What are the other ones? How many all together?

S: There's an A, B and C.

I: Do you have any sense how your class compares to the other classes?

S: I have been told the farther the number is that people are not as great in school in those classes and there's a mixture, like in Gym, they put an "L" and an "M" together.

I: So you feel your class is a bit above some of the others? Is that what you're saying?

S: No, we're the last.

I: Tell me again, because I got it wrong the first time.

S: A, B, C and D — the teachers teach a little at a higher-advanced level, and we're at the last of the alphabet.

I: Who told you this? Where did you get this from?

S: I just hear it, you know. Like some people who say it.

I: From other kids?

S: Yeah.

Some teachers would like to go further than the present arrangement of clustering enriched students in some cohorts and learning disabled ones in others. They would like to retain or reintroduce forms of semi-streaming or crypto-streaming for certain subjects or particular kinds of students.

> So my ideal situation would be to take the enhanced students and have a specific class for them. To treat everyone equally is to treat them not the same or it's to be unfair to those kids who learn best with those like themselves. But I'm not sure that I support totally streaming them: but I would in certain key classes: English, science, math.

Others, however, see the very designation and categorization of students as gifted/enhanced or learning disabled, or even as advanced, general and basic, as being very much a social and political process, as well as an intellectual and psychological one. Some teachers felt that categorizations and designations of individual students made at the elementary level could become outdated over time. As one said, "I've got parents coming up to me and saying, 'My son was IPRC'd (formally identified) in Grade 4 or 6 as gifted and you're suggesting general level (for Grade 10)'". Another worried about,

> how accurate is the assessment made of those students at the elementary stage? I have students in my classroom who I feel are probably more gifted than one who's been identified, so I don't know how they do it. It creates problems.... Some [students] refuse to be IPRC'd so you will not be categorized or slotted as an IPRC Gifted Student but you may still have all the qualities and abilities. And the same can be true of an LD [learning disabled] student. They can refuse, but they are going to be in your class.

Several teachers pointed to serious difficulties in the ways in which and extent to which students were recommended for advanced courses by their elementary colleagues.

> If you want to look at the Board statistics, the number of kids that come out of Grade 8 that go into Grade 9 advanced is 94%! But are there 94% of kids that are advanced? I mean, those are destreamed classes! But who's teaching at the advanced level?.... If these are destreamed classes, then we have the right to teach an advanced course and then, the only thing that you are cutting out is the lower-end kids. So you're cutting out one or the other.

Remarks such as these point to the strain under which the existing streamed system has been placed as social pressures, parental aspirations and teachers' concerns for fairness and opportunity have led to more and more students being entered for advanced courses in Grade 9, to the point where the designation "advanced" has little meaning any more.

Challenges and Changes

Teachers testify repeatedly to the challenge and complexity of destreaming and to the importance of engaging with it in practice if it is to be understood and implemented over time with any effectiveness. When first confronted with destreaming, some teachers had interpreted the concept only superficially without examining its deeper implications for practice. Many teachers acknowledge that practical experience of destreaming has created changes in how they approach their work — for instance by becoming less subject-centred and more student-centred.

While some teachers see destreaming as still involving teaching three or four separate groups (but this time within the class), most have come to appreciate the complexities of a destreamed classroom and the implications this has for changes in their priorities. Through experience with the realities of destreaming, these teachers claim to have made many changes to their practice in terms of personalizing their programs more, adapting and experimenting with new teaching strategies like cooperative learning, and widening their repertoire of teaching strategies as a whole.

> The key is that not one teaching strategy is the salvation of education but a variety of these strategies used at the appropriate times. And maybe different strategies for different kids at different times will address the needs of most of the kids. But teaching a Socratic method, we know that we'll lose 33% of the kids.
>
> The destreamed program, itself, is (and what we've endeavoured to do in our program is) to teach as much of a cooperative, active learning strategy to address the destreaming, or the heterogeneous group that we find in our classes.

One teacher noted how she had come to see the value of cooperative learning, and overcome difficulties in using it.

> This year I feel so much more at ease with it all. So although I think essentially I was a Socratic teacher, I really appreciate and value the cooperative methods and independent learning and so on. And I've just—I'm much more comfortable to implement it on the spur of the moment now than I used to be.
>
> Last year we were under the impression that we were so restricted in letting them do their own thing — the independent learning of active learning and cooperative learning was not happening as much. And that — and it's still cooperative and active independent learning, so I use the room next door for kids to read in, for kids to tape in, for kids to do special projects in...do their own projects.

Not all the groups *within* this teacher's class were mixed ability. Independent learning would often take place in homogeneous groups within her class, she said, which was "a motivating factor." "And I think that's something that we came to terms with last year; that homogeneous grouping is still O.K. It's not that it's not O.K. You can stream within your classroom, if you want to use that word."

Another teacher pointed to the converse dangers of excessive, wholesale, faddish uses of cooperative learning to the complete exclusion of more traditional, Socratic methods.

> Put it this way, there isn't anything I won't try. Last year I almost had a fear of using a Socratic lesson. But what I'm finding is that not everything should be done in a cooperative fashion. Sometimes the kids have to be sat down in rows in a debate fashion. The key is to try and address as many needs, of as many different kids, in as many different times and variables during the year as possible. But if you always use the Socratic method as I did for years, there were always kids who were bored and I couldn't understand why. Well, they didn't learn very well Socratically. They were doers. You can't cooperate them to death or active learn them to death, but try to use the right strategies at the right times. It really helps. The key is not that everything be active and cooperative learning. But there are times for the Socratic lesson, for role playing and for tableau.

Lincoln teachers are becoming increasingly aware that identifying the individual needs of students and catering for them effectively is at the heart of destreaming.

> In a streamed setting, I already know what the expectations are for everyone in that classroom. In this classroom, when I get them at the beginning of the year, I have to determine what their individual needs are. In a streamed setting, they have chosen, or their parents or their counsellors, what their needs are.

Another teacher reflected:

> I think you're expected to be more of a psycho-analyst with this destreaming than most teachers would dream of. You are expected to take into account the shift in moods in kids, whereas in a regular school you would be, if it's an advanced level class grade nine, the expectation is *this* and everyone in that classroom is the same.

This, of course, raises profound questions about how destreamed classes should be taught and how students should be evaluated.

Difficulties

Without educational malice or pedagogical malingering, many teachers genuinely still experience destreaming as deeply difficult. They acknowledge tendencies to focus on the "middle of the road kid", they confess to it being easier to modify down rather than up, and they admit that in some instances they revert to old, traditional styles and course outlines when they are getting "bogged down" and frustrated. Even in the most propitious circumstances, therefore, teaching destreamed classes is proving a difficult task for many teachers, though this does not erode their long-term commitment to making destreaming work nor detract from shorter term successes in doing so (Hargreaves et al., 1992: 99).

Professional Development Needs

In the words of one teacher, destreaming is "not something you can pick up on your own." Lincoln teachers are quite vehement about the need for professional development focused on strategies to teach destreamed classes, and for collaboration among teachers that is not just confined to planning, debate and moral support (as at present), but to talking about and working together with new practices as well; for "if it's not incorporated in the classroom, it's not professional development, it's professional dialogue, professional worrying."

With regard to teaching destreamed classes, although the emphasis at Lincoln is on cooperative and individualized learning strategies as alternatives to the traditional Socratic method, teachers did not mention any school-provided or school-induced professional development they had been offered in these areas. It seems to have been assumed that teachers would have already learned these methods in their previous positions, or could acquire them in their own time. Classroom observations, however, indicated that teachers still need to fine tune their skills in this area (as they themselves recognized). As we saw in Chapter 2, brainstormed ideas sometimes led to laborious copying down of the ideas that had been generated. Procedures to change the focus from many ideas to concentrate on a few were sometimes long-winded and could have been short-circuited. Cooperative group projects often became straight divisions of individual labour, with students merely coordinating their different tasks. Students here worked *in* groups, not *as* groups. They were coordinating, not collaborating. The ongoing (and not once-and-for-all) professional development needs for teaching destreamed classes should not be underestimated.

Resources

In addition to shortfalls in professional development specifically focused on teaching destreamed classes, another obstacle to destreaming was unsurprisingly felt to be class sizes. Teachers wanted these to be sufficiently small for the more individualized treatment and complex evaluation processes that destreaming required. It was not automatically assumed that reducing Grade 9 class sizes would be accommodated by injections of additional resources, however. Redistributions of existing resources were also seen as being especially necessary. One teacher pointed to guidance teachers as human resources that can be used more effectively when they are integrated into destreamed classroom settings.

> As far as I'm concerned, and I'm talking about myself here, we are doing a lot of the work that used to be done by counsellors in the classroom, but we're creating more jobs for different people (every school in the Board is going to have three Guidance Heads). Why don't you give me four classes of fifteen instead of three of twenty-six so I can deal with the students? I think that's one of the dangers with the system and I have to bring it up.

There are also other ways in which secondary schools can achieve reductions in Grade 9 class sizes: by cutting sections of courses at Grade 12 and OAC levels that are undersubscribed, by raising class sizes in Grade 11 and beyond, and so on. The staffing resources saved by such measures can then be redistributed to Grade 9. When resources are redistributed across the whole school in this way and not just within Grade 9, this implies that destreaming should be viewed as a whole-school decision with whole-school implications. This raises important equity questions about how resources are to be shared effectively and fairly between young people in the post-compulsory years and their more numerous and sometimes more at-risk counterparts in Grades 9 and 10.

Student Voices

Student interview materials reveal much less flattering images of destreaming than are usually found among the teachers. Advanced and "enhanced" students are among the least satisfied. They do not seem to understand the reasons for destreaming — the purpose of the educational change as it affects them. Other students comment that although it is potentially advantageous to the "not so smart kids", some teachers prefer to teach to the "advanced" students in the classroom, and don't put in extra effort to reach the other lower levels.

Even students who are more supportive of destreaming, nonetheless retain elements of deep ambivalence in their replies:

> I: There are also different students from different types of levels.
>
> S: Yeah.

I: How do you like that?

S: I think it is good because you have the brainers, the people who are good in some things, that can help people who aren't as good, you know. I mean, they're not stupid but they don't catch on very quickly, you know. So I think it's good, you know. When a teacher does a lesson, she has to consider very fast learners and very slow learners. So you know sometimes when I understand something and there is another majority, another couple of people that don't, we have to stop and keep on teaching that lesson until the people get it. Sometimes it is frustrating because you want to learn something else, but when you are in the position where you didn't understand it, it's good because you had more time to learn it, you know.

It is early days in destreaming, as indeed in students' understanding and experience of it. Students' views should not be endorsed automatically, but they should be taken very seriously, especially where, as here, they are often incongruent with those of many of their teachers. In general, however, it should be said that students did not offer extensive comments on destreaming in the abstract, but commented on it indirectly through their views on other related issues such as the cohort system, evaluation and instruction, that were more directly part of their experience. It is to these other issues of change substance that we turn next.

2. The Cohort System

Another aspect of school organization at Lincoln that is closely connected to destreaming is the cohort system. Each cohort currently consists of four Grade 9 classes. Organization by cohort means that essentially, Grade 9 students stay together in single classes for most of their program. The classes are merged by sex for physical education.

Cohort teachers participate in cohort meetings which, in addition to Grade 9 meetings, are used to help identify "at risk" students in the course of its "red flag" sessions, to devise strategies to help them pass the year, and to discuss serious discipline problems.

The potential benefits of the cohort system are seen to be ones of:

- creating a less alienating environment for students as they settle into their first year of secondary school

- facilitating teachers' knowledge of students by reducing the numbers of different teachers with whom each student has contact
- providing a common forum for planning, and for identifying student needs
- creating a basis for cross-curricular planning and coordination.

In practice, teachers and students offered the following perceptions of the cohort system.

Teacher Benefits

Teachers generally like the cohort system because it enables them to know their students well. Cohort meetings and Grade 9 meetings allow many positive things to be accomplished in favour of the students. Asked on a scale of 1 - 10 how she would rate the cohort system, one teacher said

> Four in terms of size. And a ten in terms of usefulness or professional discussion... You get to know your students much faster, much more profoundly, ah, socio-emotional, intellectual, behavioural, all sorts of things and how it differs. You learn about the students' strengths, subject wise and, you know, through all that. Much quicker. Because you have to go to other people for answers. "Well, what am I doing wrong?" And the outlet is right [snaps fingers] there.

Cohorts and Subject Departments

Despite its organizational potential, the cohort system has currently led to very few cross-curricular efforts. As several teachers pointed out, only those teachers working in the "exploratory" subjects had really taken advantage of the cohort system for cross-curricular purposes. In other words, there is no necessary connection between cohort systems and curriculum integration. Cohort systems provide only opportunities for integration; they issue no guarantees.

One reason for the difficulties experienced in trying to achieve cross-curricular coordination is the parallel persistence of existing subject departments and their influence within the school. This created difficulties of communication about and commitment to cross-curricular work.

> I think the biggest problem here is that teachers are of the opinion that their own areas are the most important program and nothing else exists. I

> think that develops as a result of us not being involved in developing or constructing a total program, as opposed to pocket programs for kids.
>
> I've had complaints from my teachers about the use of the facilities because some of these cross-curricular ideas are being done through the library and for example, every Grade 9 student did a cross curricular study using library materials during the history periods, and now apparently they're doing another one and using something else, so they are getting quite a bit of library time. So one of my teachers could not get the library because it wasn't available, and we didn't know that this was going on.
>
> Now there's another cross-curricular unit on the environment going on for May, so I told the committee. "We have our last unit on the environment". They haven't come to see me yet. I know they're working on it and what else can I do? It might be too much to ask, maybe next year, I don't know. A lot of this is going on but it's not being coordinated in a central location. Still, that was my concern last year and it still is.

Cross-curricular work is not prioritized as much as it should be, this teacher said. In part, the Lincoln Transition Years Coordinator reflected, assigning lower priority to curriculum coordination was a way of alleviating the burden of overload on teachers. At the same time as the report on Lincoln in *Secondary School Work Cultures and Educational Change* records, teachers' initial optimism about developing cross-curricular themes as a basis for instruction in all subject areas in all of the cohorts, was quickly undermined by older subject loyalties and traditional departmental structures. Departments were permitted to overrule cohorts on decisions about themes, while teachers were also allowed to regroup their workspaces along departmental lines. By the second phase of our study, there was no evidence that these influences exerted by subject identities and departments had weakened. Indeed, the continuing influence of subjects and departments upon possibilities for coordination seemed likely to strengthen as the school expanded its grade-range and therefore the size of its departments, too. What Lincoln's experience suggests here is that it may be extremely difficult to develop effective curriculum coordination within common Grade 9 cohorts of students, unless conscious and systematic attention is also paid to the countervailing and deeply ingrained influences of subjects and departments in the school.

Teachers felt that instead of emphasizing cross-curricular integration, cohort meetings had tended to be evaluation-driven in terms of focussing on the cross-curricular report, sometimes at the expense of other needs and purposes. This is more a comment on the nature of and emphasis given to evaluation in the Transition Years initiative at Lincoln than it is on the cohort system itself. Later, we will see that there have been subsequent attempts to simplify this evaluation focus and reduce its emphasis.

In retrospect, as we shall see, many teachers and the Transition Years Coordinator see the extended emphasis that was given to evaluation as having been unwise. Certainly, trying to develop a cross-curricular report when there is little cross-curricular programming creates immense difficulties in determining what skills are to be evaluated in different subject areas as well as how they are to be evaluated. Cross curricular evaluation and reporting without cross-curricular programming or cross-curricular teaching therefore appears to have limited value. More than this, a cohort system which does not include new patterns of curriculum, or new arrangements for teaching (such as team teaching) runs the risk of being perceived by students as not especially innovative or supportive at all, but merely a continuation of Grade 8. This brings us to what students had to say about the cohort system.

Student Voices: Community or Monotony?

In the main, students do not like being with the same people throughout the year. Asked what changes they would recommend, the cohort system was one of the most important. This applies even to those students who had found the secondary school setting somewhat intimidating at first. These students would have preferred to remain in a cohort only for part of the year. Students felt that the cohort system prevents them from getting to know other people, students and teachers alike. They end up "being stuck" with "the same old faces", including people they might not like. They want to "broaden (their) horizons" and feel they have been held back in a Grade 8 situation, which some feel to be rather demeaning. Not surprisingly, a few students see "core blocking", or the inability to "pick your own courses", as part of the cohort package which they would like to see changed.

This does not mean that students do not see some redeeming features in the cohort system. For instance, some mentioned the advantages of being within a group where most people get to know each other well, especially at the beginning of the year, where one could otherwise feel lonely. As one student said, "Well, at the beginning it's good 'cause if you don't know where a class is, you can just follow the group."

Students who were quieter, or inclined to be shy, also tended to like the cohort arrangement. One said, "it's better since then I knew the people more instead of working in a class with strangers. It's better to work with people that you get to know". On this issue, which most students were keen to discuss, the majority of responses were critical, as the following interview extracts reveal:

> I: If you had the power to change anything in this school or the program what would you change?
>
> S: Pick your own classes, 'cause like I don't feel like it's that good you get your classes chosen to you.

> I: If you were able to do something to improve this school what would it be?
>
> S: Um, basically, the only thing I don't like about this school is that, is the program where you stay with the same people. So I think that's what I would change. But other than that it's a pretty OK school.

> I: Do you like this system of staying with the same group the whole year?
>
> S: Actually, no, because you don't get to meet new people. I mean, even if they are nice or whatever, you have to stay with them the whole year. You basically get tired of people after a while, you know. If you changed classes and met different people you kinda have to broaden your horizons. With other students you meet new people and you can have the ability to learn with other people and see how they learn, you know. Because like in our class everyone has a partner, more or less where they just stay with that one person.

> S: It has good things because you're with your friend all the time. It also has bad things because you're with the same people over and over again. You never get to be off by yourself and things like that. In the beginning of the year you don't mind it because you don't want to go off by yourself. Later on though, you get sick of seeing the same people over and over again. You want to go off by yourself. I think that the kids should really get to know other

> teachers and other people in the school instead of having the same teachers and same kids in their class every single day.

With respect to the cohort system and many other aspects of Lincoln's Grade 9 system, students seemed to have had higher expectations of Grade 9 as "more firm", "harder" or "bigger" and persistently pointed to their disappointment at being deprived of the tension, increase in status, and exciting new departure which a rite of passage to a distinctly different secondary school setting might offer them. "Enhanced" students, or students from private schools, felt that they had more freedom and that they were "coasting" in Grade 9. They warned future Lincoln Grade 9s from advanced settings not to let themselves fall into the trap of feeling superior to general level students and not to let themselves "slip" in the work. "Regular" students spoke of nothing much having changed other than in terms of increased demands for work and learning new things. They warned others not to leave work to the last minute nor to expect the teachers to be either as lenient or, conversely, as vigilant and strict as Grade 8 teachers. For example, teachers are not "on your back" to finish assignments, nor do they repeat lesson material.

Finally, whether they like it or dislike it, there are aspects of the cohort system which students do not seem to understand. Students also seem to be ill-informed about other aspects of school organization such as certain features of the scheduling (e.g. "flip week" whereby the first and last periods of the day are switched every second week so as to allow teachers to see what students are like at the beginning and end of the day). This points to the commonly neglected importance of ensuring that innovations are explained to students, and that efforts are made to involve students, and not just teachers, in the process of innovation itself.

The Principal's Voice

The principal is aware of the drawbacks as well as the strengths of the existing cohort system. "I think that they (teachers) maybe believe that the kids are too ingrown with the group. They're together every hour of the day." Streaming for up to two days for enhanced and "remedial" work, or offering some optional subjects might help break up this monotony, he felt. But like his staff, he felt obliged to see the present arrangement through for two full years to assess its worth, before making any profound changes.

Summary

The cohort system is founded upon the principle of building a sense of community among its students and staff, as a way of counteracting the widely reported experiences of fragmentation and alienation that students have in conventional secondary school environments. But from the students' point of view, the achievement of *community* has also brought with it experiences of *monotony*. Lincoln's staff have yet to find a way of organizing the cohorts so that they secure community without monotony.

3. Student Evaluation

Lincoln Secondary school has a sophisticated and complex student evaluation system for Grade 9 which has taken its teachers extraordinary amounts of time, energy and commitment to devise, develop and review. Even as we write this report, the system is in the process of being revised still further.

Describing the System

At the time of the study, this evaluation system consisted of four report cards per year, completed at the end of each "round" or "quadmester". These are the "Subject Report Cards", one for each of the six core subjects and a seventh for the "exploratories". Each of the Subject Report Cards comprises different sections:

- an *Anecdotal Report* in which a teacher gives written comments on the student's progress.
- a *Frequency Report* in which a teacher reports how often a student completes course requirements. During the second year of operation, however, the *Student Frequency Scale,* in which the teacher actually recorded the number of times the student performed or completed something according to the items listed, was replaced by a *Student Achievement Scale,* of a more impressionistic or holistic nature, in which the student is rated from 0 (*Never*) to 4 (*Always*), per item.

The Subject Report Card contains four major *Subject Components*: *Knowledge, Skills, Application* and *Participating in the Learning Process.* Each one of these is subdivided into nineteen items, distributed as follows:

- *Knowledge* contains three items. These are: "Understands facts and concepts associated with the subject", "Explores willingly career opportunities related to the subject" and "Makes connections between subject and his/her life".

- *Skills* comprise six items. These are: "Poses meaningful questions," "Acquires technical skills associated with subject," "Understands a variety of purposes of writing," "Identifies main ideas in information," "Develops awareness of points of view" and "Generates creative results in subject assignments."

- *Application* comprises four items. These are: "Uses acquired knowledge in practical situations," "Uses acquired knowledge in new situations," "Uses acquired skills in practical situations," "Uses acquired skills in new situations" and "Uses acquired knowledge and skills to solve problems."

- *Participating in the Learning Process* contains five items. These are: "Stays on task," "Actively listens to pertinent ideas and information," "Respects views of others," "Encourages others" and "Shares ideas, information and resources."

In addition to the subject report cards, teachers must also complete the *Cohort Report Card* once per quadmester. This report card, also known as the *Cross-curricular Report*, assesses the student in a more holistic manner and does not address specific subjects. It consists of two parts, rated on a four-point continuum ranging from "dependence" to "independence."

- First, there is *Growth in thinking skills* with five items pertaining to "application of knowledge," "getting started on and completing a task," "use of strategies for dealing with tasks," "assessment of task progress" and "attitude toward data validity."

- Second, there is *Growth in language skills* with three items — "speaking and listening," "writing" and "reading," each subdivided into two categories, each of which has further subdivisions too detailed to record here.

- Overall skills are evaluated on a scale from 1 to 10. This scale is not meant to correspond to percentage marks but to indicate general standing in which 7 is the threshold for advanced academic status into Grade 10. The cross-curricular report has been revised twice and at the time of Phase 2 of the research, a committee had been struck to revise it a third time.

Teachers made several points about the major components of this aspect of Lincoln's Transition Years Initiative:

Benefits

Teachers feel that the evaluation system has some real advantages — namely that teachers are able to know their students much better than before (especially because of its application in the context of the cohort system), and that it provides for "tremendous dialogue with parents." As one teacher put it, "the good thing about the evaluations is that it puts some onus on the parents to get involved in the discussion."

Evaluation and the "Exploratory" Subjects

Teachers of the exploratory subjects see the evaluation system as much less valuable for them. Given their lesser contact with any one group of students in the "exploratory" system, the evaluation procedure has been much less meaningful for them with its array of detailed categories and attributions to be applied to students they scarcely know. One "exploratory" teacher made reference to throwing student papers down the stairs being just as valuable an evaluation device as the new system. The tendency to make decisions about the evaluation system in cohort meetings from which exploratory teachers were commonly excluded only heightened their estrangement from the whole process. Extensive categories and procedures of evaluation are clearly only meaningful and practical when applied by teachers who have extensive contact with their students. Efforts to review the evaluation system within the exploratory subjects have been pursued since the period of intensive data collection, although we have no direct evidence about how successful these efforts at streamlining the system and making it more meaningful have been.

Time and Complexity

The Transition Years project at Lincoln is in many respects very much evaluation-driven. It has been and continues to be extremely time consuming for teachers as they develop, review, refine and try to streamline the system. This exhausting process, some teachers feel, could be better used for cross-curricular planning and for providing individual, after-class help to students. Despite the conversion of the *frequency scale* into an overall a*chievement scale,* the number of evaluation categories has remained the same, and many teachers feel the system still remains too complex and requires further reduction.

It was this aspect of change substance more than any other about which teachers at Lincoln were most vociferously critical. The consumption of time was exhaustive in the classroom where students were being "evaluated to death" and extensive in the staffroom or "backroom", where the process of planning and review often seemed interminable. The principal himself was acutely conscious of these difficulties:

> If you look at the fact that if they (Grade 9 teachers) have two classes minimum (can be as many as four) that's basically fifty kids. For each kid some of them had four pages of evaluation sheets to complete. That's 200 pages in their grading book. You can't cope with something like that. That is unmanageable and that needs to change.
>
> You only have to look at the binders that these teachers carry around to KNOW that this has got to be an extremely onerous task. One that takes three quarters of your time. And that's the frustration is that you're doing all that record-keeping when you'd rather be doing lesson-planning. I would suggest that our evaluation policy will change — at least twice more.

While it is important to note that teachers showed little interest in reverting to straight grades and percentages, they did want something considerably more workable than the current system. One teacher advised:

> Throw it in the garbage. Let's start again. There's no teacher in this province who's going to manage the volume of work it takes to turn out those reports four times a year, and survive. It'll have to be less detail. Yes, it'll have to go towards more generalizations — and I say that in terms of categories as opposed to, um — I don't want to go back to one mark for the Grade 9s! I do not think that's an interesting concept... But you can't work with nineteen categories or more. You just can't. Like a dozen would be nice. Eight would be really nice. You know? You could deal with eight. And proficiency is worked out. It seems much more understood than frequency ever was and much more manageable than frequency ever was. Frequency seemed like — Oh my God! How many times do you have to count this kid!

Destreaming demands more flexible and extensive forms of student evaluation. The challenge that Lincoln teachers are addressing is a worthy and necessary one. But the evidence suggests that many obstacles have yet to be overcome in developing appropriate systems that are meaningful, workable and able to be integrated into classroom practice.

Discontinuities

Another problem with the evaluation system that teachers mention, is discontinuity between the innovative evaluation procedures applied to students in Grade 9, and the more conventional marks-based systems they encounter in Grades 8 and 10. This has given rise to the criticism that the concept of "transition" in this area has been lost and that the year is perceived by students as one of "limbo" with no accountability. Evidently, innovative evaluation systems will have little meaning, credibility or practicality unless they are part of a coordinated approach across the Transition Years, as well as before and beyond them.

Professional Development Needs

The value of the anecdotal report within the student evaluation system is acknowledged by all Lincoln staff. However, some teachers feel that the skills for anecdotal report writing cannot be presumed. Meaningfulness, accuracy, succinctness, clarity, intelligibility and professionalism must all be addressed and applied within anecdotal report writing, yet some teachers feel there has been no training to develop these necessary skills — which is especially regrettable given that the anecdotal section of the student report was often the part most valued by parents.

> Well last year the evaluation was meaningless. I mean the parents said, "Well, it took us a while to realize that there was no point looking at the front page of the report [chuckles]. We just skipped over to the anecdotal and read that".... And the onus was put on the teacher to get some credibility (on something nobody was going to look at) and also trying to address all the evaluation issues in an anecdotal report when there has never been any professional development on anecdotal reports. Well, you're setting yourself up.

The challenge of writing a valuable anecdotal report was particularly strong in the cross-curricular report.

> The difficulty, the real challenge in it, is writing up some bland statement that doesn't allow for any mention of any of the subjects because it's supposed to be cross-curricular and it has to be in language suitable to get

> sent home. You can't say, "Your kid avoids reading like the plague and has a whole bag of tricks," even though that might be true.

This teacher's remarks are a comment not only on the skills involved in anecdotal report writing, but also on the effectiveness of cross-curricular coordination, which, as we saw in the discussion of the cohorts, is problematic at Lincoln. Writing an effective anecdotal report means being able to write well. But it also means having something substantial about which to write! Cross-curricular evaluation without cross-curricular programming or teaching, makes this second objective very difficult to meet.

Teachers in the elementary sector often have valuable experience of anecdotal report writing and interaction and exchange between Grade 9 and Grade 7/8 teachers on this issue could provide productive professional learning for all parties. As one teacher noted:

> One of the principals (of the feeder schools) was at our retreat.... The funny thing is, because of technology, because of the computer, they switched over to not too long ago, they used to have what we are now adopting!.... So they are saying: "These people are telling us to do that for years. Now, all of a sudden, you're telling us to go back to a system that we had one time and we thought we were pretty proficient at it, but everybody told us to change and now you're telling us to go back?"

Computerized menus of key phrases are not a satisfactory shortcut for more extensive anecdotal reports. Computerized "comment banks" can use technological trickery to create nothing more than a patina of personalization in student reports — a superficial if seductive substitute of limited phrases for the crude, yet openly accountable grades they replace (Hargreaves et al., 1988). Elementary and secondary teachers alike therefore have much to learn from interchange about developing meaningful but manageable anecdotal reports about their students' progress. But whether through cross-panel discussion or through formal inservice training, professional development in student evaluation techniques, including anecdotal report writing, is clearly an important priority.

Student Voices

With rare exceptions, students see few or no redeeming features to Lincoln's evaluation system and, by and large, would prefer to revert to a percentage system, in whole or in part. When asked what they would like to change about the school, students mention the evaluation system most often.

Some students feel they hardly understand the evaluation system at all. A special needs student put it like this,

> How they do the report cards: instead of giving you A, B, C, D, etc. they give you 1 to 10 and they circle it, right? So you think that I'm a 9 or something like that and they say that is what you're working at. You could fall down. They don't give you percentages and it's really weird. Because right now, I don't understand what's going on. Teachers just give me a mark and I say, "Fine, now what is the percentage?" and she says, "You don't get a percentage"... I've actually given up on the program. When the teachers give me a mark on my report card, I just take my report card and give it to my parents and that's it. If I start getting into the Grade 9 program, now there's no percentages, I'll get all mixed up so I just leave it alone.... My parents don't understand it. I don't understand it. So I can't go and tell them something I don't understand.

A "regular" student commented:

> I don't like it at all. It's like when you get your report card, you don't know if you passed or failed. And when you get tests back and you ask what your percent was, and they keep telling you you don't get a percent, you have to look at all these different marks, it's confusing. I still don't know whether I have passed or failed some of my things. Because, maybe, I got bad marks, but then I got placed in an advanced or general level, so then I think I've passed but then when I look at the marks, I think I've failed.

It is not that teachers failed to explain the new system to students; merely that it was hard for students to understand

> They tried as best they could, but they didn't really say "This is a pass and this is a fail". They said you have to get above "7" to get placed in advanced. That's about all they said.

Most students wished to revert to simpler, more straightforward systems of overall percentages or grades, offering clear indications of whether they were passing or failing.

> I: What would you prefer?
>
> S: I prefer the grade system.

I: Like last year?

S: Yep.

I: What do you see as a disadvantage to this?

S: You don't really know how you're doing. Like, if you get all different marks in different things but you don't know how you're doing overall in the class, like you can get 8s and 9s in some areas but you can get like 3s and 4s in different areas.

I: OK. Now.

S: Not sure if you're passing the class or not.

Or as another student said, "I don't like it. I would rather have a mark where I can see where I am." This need for clear indications of "where I am" was strong among students. Some had managed to derive just those sorts of indication from the new system; assigning global values to the 1-10 scale. One student explained it like this:

> It's marked on a scale of 1 to 10 with I think, 10 is you did it perfectly, 7 you had most of it right, you made a couple of mistakes, 4 was you knew one way of doing it... you sort of knew what you were talking about, but you didn't explain it, and 1 means you had no clue, well you have a little clue but you don't know how to do it, and 0 you have no clue.

Another explained:

> You get marked on a scale from 1 to 10. 7 and up means you are doing good, um, 4 and up means you can improve a little and 3 and down means you don't really know what you are doing.

Several students to whom we spoke made sense of the new categories by converting them back into traditional grades and percentages.

> But they keep saying that like how well they think you did on it, but it's still hard not to think of it not as percent; it's very weird.
>
> And, it's like a regular report card except all the percents and A's and B's are replaced by the numbers.

A small number of students did see advantages in the new system, especially "because it gives you more to look at. Last year it was just 'A' or whatever for the whole thing. On my report card, you have different sections and they mark you on everything." But even those students who were more positive wanted to retain elements of more traditional evaluation as well, as this focus group discussion among students indicates very clearly,

> S1: It's really awful. It's only numbers 1 to 10 on how you do, it's not percentages. They keep telling us that 7 is not 70% but you can't help feeling that it is.
>
> S2: At least it's better than the As, Bs and Cs — it's just a letter. At least from 1 to 10 you know; if you're closer to 10 you know you're doing better. But you do have a lot of different areas of evaluation, so you know what you should improve. I think percentages are the best but 1 to 10 is better than A and B.
>
> S3: It shows all different areas but sometimes you like to know the percentage and not only the 1 or...
>
> S4: They should keep both. There are advantages and disadvantages to both.
>
> S2: To a lot of people it's still quite confusing because they don't know if a 5 is good or bad; I mean if you have a 4 you're failing, a 7.... [inaudible]
>
> S4: They didn't really explain it to us.
>
> S2: All they said is that a 7 and above is advanced. So if you have a 6, does it mean you are in general? [inaudible]. I can understand a 5 but 6 and 7 is just a number, that shouldn't be the difference.

One student summed matters up like this:

> At least getting a percent is probably the better thing. So if you were to get both of them (both methods), I guess, that would be pretty good. As long as you get the percent, that's all I want.

Parents' Voices

While we did not interview parents directly, most students commented that their parents experienced great difficulty understanding the evaluation system and tended to attach little credibility to it. "They don't really understand it. They don't see why we can't just get our marks; why we're getting this scale". The teachers and principal acknowledge this as a continuing difficulty although they feel that time, familiarity and sustained efforts to explain the system are proving persuasive. Students and parents tend to give meaning to the new system by converting it to terms and procedures more familiar in the old one. Thus, students and parents are inclined to convert the 1-10 scale into percentages or letter systems: e.g., a 7 is interpreted as a 70% or as a C or C+ grade. Two students pointed out that percentages still survive in some areas, especially in the marking of the math tests. However, lack of parental understanding about the report card was not necessarily a problem from the student's viewpoint. Parental ignorance could be student bliss! As one student put it:

> My parents don't really know either, so that's O.K., because I'm not going to get into too much trouble. I don't worry too much when report cards come, because they don't know what it means anyway, so it doesn't matter.

Non-understanding and misunderstanding of the alternative evaluation system and extended report card seems pervasive among students and parents alike. This could be seen as misinformation or miscommunication, or as people hanging on resistantly to concepts and categories which are more familiar. But in all these comments, a clear sense is also being communicated of a need not only for simplicity, but also for standards, benchmarks, and clear points of reference as a context for describing and recording student achievements in an intelligible and accountable way.

Judgement or Partnership?

In *Rights of Passage*, Hargreaves and Earl (1990) argued for two alternative systems of student evaluation to complement traditional examining and testing of a pencil-and-paper based kind: performance-based assessment, and student self-assessment. Both are essential components of an effective and comprehensive student evaluation strategy. The Lincoln evaluation system has adopted, almost exclusively, only the first of these alternatives. Only in the exploratory subjects do substantial efforts appear to have been made to collect student evaluations of the program and, indeed, of how it is taught, as a basis for making these programs more relevant and more challenging for students. With the exception of English, there is little evidence of student self-evaluation, of evaluation being negotiated or used as a basis for dialogue and review between teacher and student. Rather, Lincoln's evaluation strategy appears to have extended the domains and details of judgements which teachers pass upon students — cognitively, practically and personally. As one "enhanced" student remarked "actual knowledge may only be a fifth of the evaluation." Where evaluations applied to many things like bringing books and equipment to class, this, he and others felt, could be demeaning. "They mark everything", said a fellow student. Another commented, "it's all different areas that you get marked on. Like even if you just bring your books to class, you get marked on that". Under these circumstances, where evaluation remains one-sided, but significantly extends its purview into the behavioural details of all that students do, it creates tendencies to make "psychologized" judgements about students and may unintendedly turn systems of evaluation into systems of extended and unending surveillance. Little wonder that so many students preferred the simplicity, clarity and brutal honesty of conventional grades and marks. This is not an argument in favour of traditional testing. Rather, it points to the difficulty teachers and schools have in extending evaluation practices to include students as genuine partners in the learning process. This rich, untapped reserve of student self-evaluation is revealed in one student's advice that

> If the teacher says you can't do something right, and you know deep down inside that you can, you shouldn't listen to the teacher. You should listen to your heart. "If you know you can do something, then do it!"

Lincoln's teachers have been and continue to be bold pioneers of extended and diverse forms of student evaluation that address the realities of mixed ability settings. Their ongoing struggle to create a suitable system demonstrates the inherent difficulties of establishing a proper balance between *meaningfulness* and *manageability*. Their anxieties about anecdotal report writing point to the need for specific inservice training in this area. And their omission of student self-evaluation as a component of the assessment process, signals the serious danger of teachers' evaluation efforts becoming misdirected towards developing more extensive, encompassing (and not always clearly accountable) systems of teacher judgement and surveillance, rather than towards making students more active partners in the learning process.

4. The Mentor System

The mentor system was designed as a vital part of the Transition Years initiatives at Lincoln. As such, all teachers and Grade 9 and 10 students were expected to participate. The principal in particular was initially insistent on its compulsory character. Within the first weeks of the school year, students were asked to list their first three preferences for teachers whom they wished to be their mentor. This mentor, it was intended, would provide students with at least one caring adult with whom they could meet to discuss problems of transition or of any other kind. Mentors maintained contact with parents who, by and large, appeared to like the arrangement.

At the end of the first year, a survey was conducted to determine the degree of success of the mentor program. As a result of this, modifications were introduced in the second year to make the program more flexible. Students were now no longer required to make their choice of mentor at the very beginning of the school year, and participation in the mentor program was made optional for teachers and Grade 10 students alike, although it remained mandatory for Grade 9 students.

Most teachers felt that while there were doubts about the appropriateness of the mentor program on a system-wide basis, some of the changes had been positive — such as the optional nature of the program for teachers and for Grade 10 students. Twenty percent of Grade 10 students, interestingly continued to opt for having a mentor in the second year.

Of the three major planks of the Transition Years initiatives at Lincoln, the mentor program appears to have encountered the greatest difficulties of maintaining sustained commitment to implementation, although a reduced emphasis on the program over time was in some ways part of a deliberate and probably necessary decision to alleviate the intense pressures of coping with multiple innovations at a very rapid pace.

Impact and Continuance

During the first year, while many students had gone through the motions of selecting a mentor, they had not progressed with the relationship beyond the initial meeting. Typical comments were "actually, I've only seen him once this year at the beginning of the year when we first got together"; "I used it a couple of times just to see how it is"; and "I remember meeting him the first time. He bought us donuts and pop and we were just talking. I think that was the last time because I don't remember meeting with him after that." Most mentors, it seems, took no initiative themselves to arrange further meetings. In this respect, administrative insistence on the program's mandatory status was at best only partially successful. At least one teacher felt that the whole program had been put on the "back burner" for the second year and had lost a great deal of the original impetus. Another teacher thought "mentoring had taken a backseat to what else we are doing and is sort of the last thing on your list and sort of gets left off." "And the students", he remarked, say "What mentor? Oh yeah! I saw my mentor once a couple of years ago!"

The Mentor Role

Some teachers took to the mentor role "naturally" and saw it as an extension of the ongoing informal contacts they had with students in areas like music, computers or extra-curricular activities. In spite of this, one such teacher decided against volunteering because of competing commitments, while another teacher who disliked the role kept two of his assigned students anyway because of his more informal connections with them. This correlated with the statements of some students that their most supportive teachers were not necessarily their mentor, and that the mentor system could be somewhat artificial. In these respects, barriers to implementation of the mentor system for teachers were those of the *contrived* nature of the role, and of competing time commitments, especially in the demanding context of multiple innovations that characterized Lincoln Secondary.

Student Voices

Additional reasons for uneven implementation were to be found in students' perceptions of the system. They, too, pointed to aspects of artificiality in the system. They suggested that participation in the mentor program was valuable but more for other people than themselves — and therefore insinuated that the program carried associations of dependency and stigmatization. Privacy and confidentiality were also important concerns. Students sometimes feared they could not really trust their mentor with a serious problem because it might be reported to parents or authorities — a fear that was not without foundation given the planned intention of regular contact between mentors and parents. These ethical and practical concerns of privacy and confidentiality will need to be confronted in the design and implementation of all mentor programs.

Potential

The mentor system holds real promise from the perspective of those who participate in it. Students are not critical of it. They think it is possible to talk about things that might be more difficult to discuss with their parents; they enjoy the "change of pace" in the school day; and they like the idea of it as a service to which they can turn, if needed.

One teacher described an instance which illustrated how the mentor system could be taken further and become a device not only for understanding students, but also for being their advocates.

> Now they've come into me, a few of the girls have come, when was it? In December, when they were having a lot of problems with one of their teachers. "We just don't know what to do. We're just so far behind..." So I listened to them and just let them go for fifteen minutes and all of them came in, every single one, all five of them and I said "Now what do you want me to do?" And they all screamed and yelled. And I said "all right, why don't I sit down with that teacher...." "No, you can't do that, she'll think we hate her, we don't hate her, we're just..." and they went off. So I talked to the head of the department about the kids' concerns. Are they valid, and he said, "Yes, they're extremely valid and I'll speak to her". Then, they never came back to me, so I assumed, I didn't want to say to them "Have things changed?" I waited for them to come back to me. No problems after that.

In mentoring, there is a potential that extends far beyond counselling and caring, to more challenging processes of advocacy for and inclusion of students and their perspectives in the wider operation of the school. Mentoring has clear potential to recognize young people's value, and to give them voice. It is a potential worthy of further exploration.

Professional Development Needs

Effective mentoring does not come naturally, however. For many teachers, it requires and will require shifts of attitude, skill and demeanour compared to their usual classroom roles. The same teacher quoted above described the issues like this:

> I treat the kids exactly the way I treat the teachers in the school, and the principal. No, I don't treat anybody any differently. Maybe I should. Except that I get more stern with the kids and keep them in line where I wouldn't do that with the teachers, but you know, at a conversational level, I treat them with the same respect as I treat anyone else. I treat them as adults because I consider them as adults.... I would say that the teachers who don't, who talk down to the kids have a really hard time with them. You always know that when a student is very critical of someone on the staff it's because of the way they're being..., the teacher is treating the kids and everything. They're being inferior. They're talking to them like children, or whatever; Even though they are children, I still treat them as adults because I want them to believe they have the responsibilities of adults.

The commitment and skill to recognize the developing needs of adolescents for greater independence do not come easily to all teachers who may need to learn how to talk to individual students (rather than groups or classes) in a different way. One teacher commented on the changes she had experienced in this regard.

> T: I took guidance this year. It's had a tremendous impact on how I view mentoring.... They [teachers at a different school] have mentoring but mentoring is more reporting to the parents, whereas ours is taking more of the discussion, compassion, personal problems that go by the wayside in guidance. I prefer the way we've approached it.... Teachers in teachers' college must be given guidance training. It's very important.
>
> I: What's the help? I mean, what's it achieved?
>
> T: Listen. Listen. Observe. Pick things up. Be able to approach a subject. Because when you teach a classroom, of course, you're teaching with individuals and a group, but it's mostly a group thing. You have to think of them in terms of a group a lot of the time. A lot of the time. Even though you're individualizing program, it's thinking of the person's skills, not so much who they are. And it's helped me think about how to talk to kids. What to talk to them about.

If one purpose of the Transition Years initiatives is to encourage and enable more teachers to take responsibility for the personal as well as intellectual development of their students, in order to make secondary schools into more caring communities, then attitudes to mentoring and the skills of mentoring individual students will need to be identified as an important focus for inservice training.

Summary of Substance

Lincoln secondary school is grappling with the realities of restructuring in the classroom and not just planning and preparing for it in the staffroom. Lincoln has created working examples of destreaming, cohort grouping, alternative evaluation strategies, and mentoring for other schools and their teachers to see, to emulate, to adapt, or to avoid, as necessary. At the end of this chapter, we will review what we believe can be learned from these elements of change substance in the Transition Years at Lincoln. Next, however, we want to review the *processes* by which these changes were developed, implemented, integrated, and evaluated. For as a new school, with specially hired teachers and a mandate to innovate across a broad canvas, Lincoln is at least as interesting for the ways in which it speaks to issues of change process, as for the ways it addresses matters of change substance.

Change Process

Change process issues are, of course, closely intertwined with ones of change substance. Several, such as time commitments and the demands of multiple innovation have already emerged in our discussion of the implementation of particular Transition Years components at Lincoln. In this section, we want to look at more general issues surrounding the establishment and implementation of extensive and interconnected initiatives of a profoundly innovative nature in specially constructed "lighthouse" settings like Lincoln. Of particular importance at Lincoln are the effects of the restructuring effort on teachers' working lives, and whether these effects are acceptable; indications as to whether the effort is likely to be sustained over time; and the extent to which the Lincoln model can be transposed meaningfully and practically to other settings.

As stated earlier, our analysis of change process at Lincoln should be read in conjunction with the case study report of the school in *Secondary School Work Cultures and Educational Change* (Hargreaves et al., 1992) which looks at earlier stages of the change process. Some of our earlier findings are therefore presented in a summary format, with updating from our more recent round of data collection where appropriate. It should not be assumed, however, that any findings and interpretations which are accorded longer space or those which are less amply supported by reported data here, are necessarily any more or less important than those cited in the previous report.

Breaking the Paradigm

Innovative "lighthouse" schools like Lincoln Secondary establish important precedents for and concrete examples of Transition Years changes which can confound the myths and misunderstandings about such changes, things, and especially about destreaming, that are common in other settings. Schools like Lincoln Secondary self-consciously break the paradigms of existing educational practice. At considerable risk to themselves, their staffs and their students, they create concrete examples of other ways of doing things. This paradigm-breaking function is the most important one that lighthouse schools perform. Lincoln Secondary School has shown to other schools and teachers that destreaming, or some version of it, for instance, is possible, can be manageable, and can be educationally productive. The practical contribution of lighthouse schools like Lincoln is, in this respect, invaluable.

Lincoln Secondary exemplifies meanings and methods of destreaming and student organization that are more sophisticated and complex than simple senses of three or four groups being taught together in one class that are common in other settings. The need for individualization, personalization, decreased uses of standard textbooks, cooperative learning, a wide repertoire of teaching strategies (including Socratic method), and flexibility in how they are used is widely recognized at Lincoln. As we have seen, versions of these strategies are also often practised, albeit with varying degrees of understanding and mastery. Schools like Lincoln break the paradigms of practice by creating living images of possibility, practicality and hope. Lincoln's teachers do not just talk about restructuring. They actually live it, which is no mean feat! This restructuring is not achieved or even approached without effort and error, sometimes in the face of immense difficulties.

Difficulties and Challenges

Transition Years initiatives in Grade 9 are deeply difficult to implement, even in the most apparently favourable settings. Even among the most committed teachers, destreaming demands much in terms of energy and ingenuity, and when they are uncertain, or exhausted, or their discipline is difficult, many teachers confess that they revert to more traditional methods less suited to mixed ability settings. The student evaluation system also continues to challenge teachers in terms of establishing a balance between meaningfulness and manageability, and even at the time of writing this report, teachers continue to struggle with this issue. The common cohort system offers caring, consistency and community but is also prone to breeding student monotony, and Lincoln staff are still searching for ways to retain the cohort system's benefits without also perpetuating its faults. And lastly, while the mentor system holds out real promise, the overwhelming demands of other priorities have forced it into the background. The difficulties of making the needed changes in the Transition Years should not be underestimated, for Lincoln or anywhere else.

The Shock of the New

Undertaking radical innovations in the context of opening a new school is often perceived by colleagues in other settings as an enviable luxury. In many respects, however, opening a new school does not mitigate the challenges of radical change, but compounds them. In addition to doing all the things that teachers in all schools must do, teachers in new and innovative schools must also establish all the rules and expectations for discipline from scratch. When a new school opens, everyone is like a supply teacher because reputations have yet to be built. And where the regime is a novel one, and the rules are different, this process can be especially stressful. So, too, are the demands of developing new materials and writing new programs. As one teacher remarked in our first round of interviews: "Initially, it certainly is a lot of work because you have to structure program and everything else to meet the needs of the kids."

Change vs. Creation

Establishing a new school, especially one that is also innovative, is very different from *changing* a school from one state to another. In new settings, creation cannot be slow. It is inherently fast. If staff have had little time to work together before the establishment of the school, it may be hard to develop a shared vision, and visions and decisions may therefore have to be imposed to some extent, at least at the outset. Much of the educational change literature and the increasingly accepted wisdoms of change that have emerged through it, may therefore not apply to the process of educational *creation* and *establishment* (but see Sarason, 1972). We urgently need newly theorized understandings of this inherently difficult process.

Structure and Culture

Establishing a new school requires simultaneous creation of structures *and* cultures. Collaborative cultures of trust and support are essential for implementing new school structures effectively. At Lincoln, the lead time for establishing such cultures prior to opening the new school was almost certainly insufficient. Greater attention could also have been given to the continuing construction and maintenance of such cultures during the early periods of the school's development (Hargreaves et al., 1992).

The Chosen Ones

A compliment of young, capable and committed staff dedicated to the restructuring mission the school is pursuing, who have been specially selected for that purpose (as most of Lincoln's teachers were), is in most respects a powerful asset for improvement.

However, where external demands and expectations are excessive, and the internal supports of the staff culture are underdeveloped or weak, a cadre of high achieving and professionally skilled teachers can create a workaholic culture that pursues an endless quest for perfectionism, and places teachers in danger of burnout or withdrawal as a result.

> everyone takes great pride in their abilities and the people who were chosen — and we feel we were chosen — because there were a lot of people who applied for headships, specially the heads, you know, we feel we're a pretty special group because we took on a monumental task and we had NO idea what the time allotment was going to be.

Collaborative teacher cultures are not just devices to protect and support the weak. Paradoxically, in highly innovative settings, communities of particularly gifted teachers may be most in need of such collaborative cultures, not just to socialize, plan together and provide moral support (which Lincoln's teachers did very well), but also to declare and discuss problems of practice and thereby become more accepting of the inevitable imperfections that accompany radical change.

Experiences of Collaboration

Our more recent round of data collection raised conflicting and inconsistent evidence about whether and in what ways the school was more collaborative now. Some teachers pointed to greater trust, more collaboration, more mutual support as staff had come to know each other better. They would not like to return to more traditional secondary schools where this was absent. Others said things like, "I don't feel it's ... as collaborative as it used to be. There's not enough time for it because we're bigger (because of new staff) and there are factors regarding willingness to collaborate." "Not a lot of people go out drinking anymore. Not a lot of people call as much." As we shall see shortly, these apparent contradictions are rooted in the fact that the realities of staff relations and decision-making at Lincoln Secondary are not common ones, but vary depending on how teachers are positioned in the school. For some, the school is indeed more collaborative. For others, it may be no better and possibly even worse in this respect. We will see why this is the case, shortly.

Multiple Innovation and Overload

Lincoln Secondary School has undertaken multiple innovation on a scale and at a pace scarcely imaginable in most other school settings. On the one hand, Lincoln has realistically recognized, as did Sarason (1990), that effective and substantial educational change is only successful when the different components of such change — curriculum, evaluation, grouping etc. — are tackled together, as an interconnected system. On the other hand, restructuring on this scale and at this pace tends to overload teachers, and tempts them to try to do everything at once. This can lead to accidental neglect or oversight of other important but less pressing school priorities, it can sometimes reduce rather than increase the quality of instruction, and it can lead to stress, frustration and even burnout among the teachers who experience it. We will now look at these three consequences in turn.

Restructuring and "Keeping House"

First, in the early stages at Lincoln, the demands of multiple innovation led to some oversight or relative neglect of some of the more basic, routine processes that hold a school together and give it strength. Our report in *Secondary School Work Cultures and Educational Change* of change process at Lincoln pointed to problems with establishing clear and consistent approaches to discipline, commitment to extracurricular activities, building strong school spirit, and developing strong informal relationships with feeder schools. By the time we revisited the school for this study, all teachers commented on the improvements in discipline resulting from their giving it more focused attention and from older students now being present and providing role models in the school. Links with feeder schools were still underdeveloped, although the principal of one of these schools had made a presentation at a recent staff retreat. But from the perspective of many students we interviewed, school spirit remained a problem. There just wasn't enough of it. To illustrate this point, they said they could not get sufficient support for their sports teams at matches.

In approaching restructuring, it is important to think big — to see the many components and their connections that need to be addressed. The evidence of this case suggests, however, that it may be better to start a little smaller, if innovation is not to take an unacceptable toll on teachers' time and force teachers into impossible choices about priorities. Some things — be these curriculum, evaluation, instruction or mentor programs — should be left deliberately on the back burner for later, allowing proper attention to be paid to a few key aspects of the restructuring being attempted. In addition, the impetus toward restructuring and all the effort this consumes should not be allowed to obliterate more traditional, but equally necessary priorities which the school effectiveness literature emphasizes, such as consistency in discipline, and the provision of a safe, orderly and caring environment in which learning can take place. The importance of restructuring should not override the necessity for "keeping house". At Lincoln, to the chagrin of many of the teachers, program priorities initially tended to relegate concerns and vigilance about discipline and safety to a lower level (although this was recouped to a large extent later).

Overload and Instruction

Second, and ironically, innovation can sometimes lead to overload and exhaustion which depress teaching quality rather than improve it, and produce the very opposite of what innovation is meant to achieve. We saw examples of this in Chapter 2 with a highly innovative teacher who typically taught straight, Socratic lessons by the last period of the day, because she had exhausted all her energy by that point. Another teacher described how lack of time to recuperate sometimes led him and his colleagues to fall back on more conventional methods.

> We're all trying to do too much and as a result, we are starting to spin wheels and actually work harder and do less.
>
> Now what you saw with the grade 11, for example, was on the verge of the very traditional way of doing things; and I've been coasting a bit with them because of just general stress. And being creative and trying to develop lessons that really work and are different takes time. The standing joke used to be "Is this lunch or a meeting?"

Overload and Teachers' Working Lives

Third, the approach to restructuring which Lincoln Secondary School took had an immense impact on the working lives of its teachers. For some teachers, the experience was "exhilarating but exhausting." For others, especially during the initial months, when we were collecting data for our earlier study of change process (Hargreaves, et al., 1992), the exhaustion was clearly too great. When asked what the school was known for, one teacher replied that among colleagues in the board, it was known as "the school that works its teachers to death."

By the second year, when we were collecting data for the present study, teachers were beginning to feel better because their "comfort zone" was larger, they had more confidence and expertise in what they were doing, and several had deliberately eased back on a number of commitments or had taken a lower profile to recoup personal time for self, home and family. Even so, the demands of the job remained high, and the workload exceptionally heavy.

> I feel like in order to meet my own expectations of what being a teacher to these Grade 9s is, it takes a lot of hours and a lot of effort. It takes a lot of thought and as you can tell with having gone through my day with me, there's not time during the day for thought. The stuff that I take back from the class still needs to be organized and there's still preparation and marking for tomorrow.
>
> You have people establishing their reputations; we have some really great teachers here but it's still a lot of work to create a profile and that's certainly a factor — incredibly complex expectations in terms of developing good evaluation tools, being creative and entertaining the grade nines.
>
> It's a terrible thing to say but I'm not surprised when I get to school at 7:30 or 7:15 and there's other people already here working.... It doesn't shock me anymore. It doesn't surprise me when I'm not the last person to leave at 5:00 or 5:30. There were some new people who came on staff who've been in other settings who were really quite taken back and didn't know how to fit in here. [So] I don't think it's any different [from last year].... I think that we're probably the most work-oriented type of people that I've ever seen.

Because of these demands and expectations, many teachers echoed the sentiments of a colleague who remarked on the tremendous stress that change places on the personal life. This had been commented upon in our first round of interviews, where concrete instances were provided of teachers' personal relationships that had been placed under pressure. Another teacher revealed that:

> The person that I live with said to me in August, he said, "you are not going to do what you did last year. I want to see you, I want to see a person come home in smiles. I want to hear you laugh again." I laugh here, right now, at the beginning of the semester. By the end, I'm just burnt.

Feelings about workload and levels of commitment were by no means uniformly negative, however. On the contrary, the vast majority of teachers spoke in ambivalent and sometimes seemingly contradictory terms about *both* the frustrations *and* the fulfilment of the work. After two years, they were continually reflecting on whether the trade between frustration and fatigue on the one hand, and fulfilment on the other, was worth it. A teacher who was very critical of workload demands and who, in our first round of interviews, was actively considering leaving the school, or even teaching altogether, then went on to say:

> These last two years have been very, very interesting and I think I, as a teacher, have grown tremendously, coming here. I had a lot of ideas that I never was in an environment that I could bounce them off people who could bounce them back in a different way.

He continued:

> Personally, I have gained a tremendous amount just being in an environment where you try to do new things and there is a feeling where you can fail. I mean, you're going to do things that aren't going to work. As far as the kids go, I'm not sure that any one group is going to benefit; in the long run, I think because the teachers will benefit and there will be a pay-off. Whether it's worth the cost (sighs) that's a personal question I think every teacher has to answer for themselves.
>
> Overall, I think it's like saying that divorce can be a growth experience (laughs). I mean the pain and suffering can cause you to grow and I think any learning has anxiety attached to it. I mean, it's through stress and struggle, and attempting the unknown that one grows, so sure I'd say that the end result has probably been positive. Probably, because I was at a stage in my career where it would have been very easy just to get into a rut.

Another commented:

> It's an awful lot of work. But then again, there's an awful lot of freedom too. You can try anything in this school. Nobody minds that my kids are all in the stairwell and in this room and that room. No one gets the least bit upset about that. There are schools where you don't let them out of your classroom.

After listing a series of criticisms and complaints, one teacher summed up his feelings and perhaps those of many colleagues by saying:

> I think in terms of teaching, it's probably been the best time of my life, apart from all the negative things that I have said here. I've learned more

> in the last two years than in all the years that I've been teaching. So I don't regret it.

After two years, the rewards of professional growth, flexibility to experiment, opportunities to take risks, and the chance to be involved in the cutting edge of innovation appeared to be sufficient for teachers to tolerate and accommodate the extraordinary degrees of time and commitment that were required — although as one teacher said, "if I had to do this for the rest of my life. No way."

An important issue that remains is whether the lives and selves of Lincoln teachers can tolerate these levels of sustained pressure and commitment in the longer term. Only longitudinal study will be able to determine this. More important still, perhaps, is whether the kinds of commitment made by teachers at Lincoln, with all the sacrifices entailed, would be practical or desirable propositions for other teachers in other schools. Many teachers at Lincoln had given considerable thought to this issue and were doubtful whether the Lincoln experience could be replicated elsewhere, with teachers who were not hand-picked, not already committed, not willing to sacrifice immense amounts of personal time for professional change. As one teacher explained:

> I think it's an excellent model [we have] but I think if anybody tries to duplicate it, they are going to be terribly disappointed. I can't see anybody being in a position that we were in starting fresh... Staffing is so important. I don't know of anybody who can do what we have done. I hope nobody expects them to.... I can't imagine how difficult this would be in a school where you're working with the existing staff where there are a variety of philosophies of education: You need a lot of flexibility and an awful lot of commitment. Unless you're willing to try some changes I think it could be disastrous.

Another teacher's advice to schools embarking on Transition Years changes was:

> Don't try to do it too fast. Think big, start small. I'm very committed to the Transition Years idea and destreaming etc. Where we ran amok, in my estimation, is that we have tried to do too much, too quickly.

"Implementation by stamina" as one teacher put it, may be a necessary evil in the early stages of all large-scale innovation. But some of the pressures that innovation exerts on teachers' working lives can be avoided and could have been at Lincoln — by reducing the scope of the innovation to be tackled at any one time, by extending the lead-in time for teacher planning to prepare for innovation, by focusing political and administrative expectations more on the importance of learning than on the necessity of achieving success, and by building professional cultures among teachers and administrators which encourage open discussion about practice, allow imperfections to be admitted readily, and promote the honest and direct working through of the unavoidable conflicts of view. Certainly, there are serious doubts among Lincoln teachers, themselves, as to whether teachers in other schools with lesser commitments of time, energy or belief could cope with the pace and scope of change which they had experienced. Such statements were offered neither in a spirit of smugness nor of superiority, but out of a sense that Lincoln and its teachers were decidedly different, and that what they did could not be transposed with ease elsewhere.

Conflict and Change

Conflict is a necessary part of change (Lieberman et al., 1991). It is not pathological — something to be suppressed in or expunged from the quest for improvement. It is an essential part of a process where perceptions differ, experiences vary, uncertainty abounds, and competing interests are necessarily at stake. Conflict is often unwanted and, especially where leaders are concerned, can be perceived as a sign of failure or disloyalty; of not being one of the team. Yet, acknowledging conflict and working through it openly can be deeply beneficial for change. It can increase an organization's capacity to learn and improve by identifying problems early, bringing a wider range of information and perspectives to bear on these problems, forcing teachers and principals to return to and redefine their basic principles and purposes, and providing opportunities for the honest and productive release of guilt, anger or frustration which might otherwise surface in other, less productive ways.

Teachers at Lincoln were concerned that conflicts were not acknowledged openly; that there were no means for resolving complaints. This bred resentment and added considerably and needlessly to the stress of coping with change. Indeed, it is possible that the magnitude of the frustrations expressed to this research team was exaggerated at least in part because of teachers' limited opportunities to express them elsewhere.

One teacher remarked: "I think there is a perception in this school that conflict is something that may be just under the surface lots of times and people are afraid to bring it out." He described an instance where:

> We were talking about conflict resolution last year and I brought it up at one of the staff meetings that I felt that this was an area that we needed to have some PD [professional development] on. I was approaching it from the aspect of the kids, not only the teacher versus the kid but kid versus kid. I didn't go as far as to say staff member or staff versus administration or school versus board, or whatever, but you use the same strategies all the time. Lots of people said "We need that", but it never went anywhere.

When conflict is suppressed, he said, as it frequently was at Lincoln, "it becomes incestuous and it brews and that's not healthy". On the basis of this experience, another teacher's advice to schools embarking on restructuring in the Transition Years was:

> You need to always be dealing with problems that arise, when they arise, in a positive, constructive way — dealing with conflict as a growth as opposed to an abscess — watching the thing evolve and not trying to push the evolution too quickly and looking at the staff.

There are constructive ways to deal with conflicts — discussing them, putting them "on the table," giving time to work through them during staff retreats, using facilitators to depersonalize them (especially when they may be directed at particular individuals) and so forth. One lesson from Lincoln is that schools embarking on radical restructuring need to approach such conflicts constructively, with courage, candidness and compassion.

Vision and Voice

Shared visions can create unity and cohesion. Strong personal *visions* however can create collective *divisions*, between teachers who share the vision and those who do not. At Lincoln Secondary, there was evidence that the principal's prior vision was one that created this kind of divergence. Such a prior and personal vision, communicated to rather than developed with one's staff can be less of a vision that clarifies, than one that blinds (Fullan, 1991).

> T: The Principal has a vision as to what he wants to see happening and that is his right as principal but I think you know he has hired a very strong staff that has its own visions too.
>
> I: So you don't see a shared vision, you say?
>
> T: Well, it's splintered.

Another teacher put it this way:

> If you were factory workers where the boss said "do this" and you do it, that would be one thing. But if the principal wants teachers who care about what they are doing, professional people who believe in what they are doing, they have to believe that their voice is being heard and that there is some vehicle to have that changed where you are not looked at as being the other side.

Visions developed and displayed in this way are of little value if they suppress the teacher's voice (also Hargreaves, 1993), but as the quotations above indicate, this is exactly how some of these teachers who did not share the principal's particular vision had come to feel.

Even in the best circumstances, developing shared vision requires time, however. This is typically a commodity that newly created schools do not have. In the initial stages of the school's creation and establishment, criticisms of Lincoln's lack of shared vision, therefore, may be less a criticism of its principal's personal and strongly articulated preference, than of the lead-in time allowed for the school's creation, and the development of the staff culture through which the vision would be implemented. However, derived as they are from the second round of interviews, the quotations above indicate that problems about the school's vision, whose vision it is, who shares it, and whose voices are quelled because of it, are more than a product of very early implementation, but seem to be more deeply embedded in the continuing nature of the school's culture and the principal's style of leadership.

"Innies and Outies"

In the initial description of Lincoln's staff culture in the *Secondary School Work Cultures and Educational Change* (Hargreaves et al., 1992), two staff groups in the school were identified by the staff themselves as the "Ins" and the "Not Ins". The "Ins" had influence. This was felt to be due to their informal leader, or "hip pocket guy" as one teacher called him, being particularly close to the principal. Several teachers also stated that they felt decisions about issues affecting the whole staff were already made with the input of the "In" group prior to general discussion. Those in the "In" group had the principal's ear and sought to "plant the idea and make him think it's his own." The "Not In" group, many of whom were in more marginal, "exploratory" subjects, had to further their interests by negotiating via a collective front.

By the time of our second round of data collection for this particular study, both groups still appeared to have a strong presence within the school.

> There is definitely a perception in this school that there are "Innies and Outies" — people who are on the inside and the on the outside and I think it has deepened this year.... Some of the new staff may be some of the "Innies" but I think still that the principal listens to the same people that he listened to last year.
>
> The other difference that I've noticed that's heightened (it was there in a much more convivial way last year) was the level of competition between staff, in a negative sense (because competition can be very healthy) — but what I see is people uncomfortable and it also comes from intimidation too. People are very reticent to say things because they don't want to fall out of favour, or they don't want, with the competitive edge, to be the second person to say the same thing; and it should be the right thing to say. "Oh sure, we're dealing with that problem, what's the matter with you?"

Another teacher commented:

> Especially after this retreat, I was hoping you would see a turn around and you would see some changes within. But I think there's still a large of core of teachers who are still unhappy and are looking through the blue sheets [for new positions] of other schools. Whether or not they will actually move or not I don't think so, but... I think they see the people that are making the decisions too much on one side and the people who have to carry it out too much on the other.

Each group's characterization of the other was sometimes expressed in terms of mutual recrimination. The "Outies" were sometimes portrayed as people who were not as prepared to get involved; people who were probably habitual complainers anyway.

> There was this feeling last year that there was this one particular area that had the ear of the administration more than the rest. But on the other hand, if I look at it from an outsider's point of view, my perception was that those who didn't have the ear, spent most of their time complaining anyway. Whereas the others were trying to get in there and do some things. So it's probably true that they did have more of an inside track in terms of being able to get their views across.

Conversely, "Innies" were sometimes characterized as over committed workaholics without real lives or homes to go to, who achieved influence simply by endurance.

> And that feeling that there's a very small group of people imposing stuff on the rest of the staff is very pervasive and when you say, "this is stupid, I don't want to do this", the response is, "Well, you should get involved, you should be in on the committee." And then we get implementation of change by stamina. The person who's got the most time to sit on the most committees is going to have the most effect. So there is a very small group of people who do not live outside of the school, they do not have lives, they do not have families, they do not have (laughs) commitments, that take over the agenda. Many people feel the teaching agenda has been taken over.

One teacher saw both groups as being somewhat at fault.

> We see a group of individuals as being "let's do the project, forget about the problems"; have these blinders on. And the other larger part of the school, I think, are seeing the day-to-day frustrations and are focusing on the negative.

The nature of and differences between these two groups in many ways explain why teachers' experiences of collaboration at Lincoln could differ so much. Two teachers captured the reasons for this within a focus group discussion that developed an analogy of teaching at Lincoln being like walking a tightrope. One teacher began:

> There are people at this school that I feel, that when I'm on that tightrope and I'm ready to fall, there's a safety net below and I'll get caught. And if those people weren't there, and if there was a chance of me hitting the ground, I wouldn't take that many risks.... So I'm looking forward instead of blaming the back, and that's the part that I enjoy.

With clear references to administrative support and the group of teachers associated more closely with the administration, a second teacher went on to develop the analogy thus:

> I like that analogy.... I think that the persons holding the poles of the tightrope, once you're up there, are in trouble. I don't feel so much support from the pole holders. It's a general feeling and it is stronger in some areas than in others. I don't feel personally or professionally encouraged other than by the people I'm in the net with.

The differences between the two groups, the experience that committee decisions were often overruled, the feeling that too many decisions were "top-down", were recurrent themes in the data we collected in both the earlier and later phases of the study. By the second phase, however, there were some signs that these matters were beginning to receive administrative attention.

> At the last staff meeting or two staff meetings ago and a last staff heads meeting, some teachers brought forward that they felt they were not being listened to by the administration. The principal looked quite shocked about that and quite apologetic and would try and make some changes.
>
> I think people are more willing to say that "This is not a good environment for discussing things because people are too intimidated in this setting to bring something up." There is certainly much more voicing of that now than there was last year. New people sniped and griped in private, so that's a healthier evolution.
>
> I think the principal now knows that there has been, that there were a lot of dissatisfied people for various reasons... and I think that the decisions are now taking into account those feelings, those frustrations and we'll see more of that.

In the early rush of implementation, the pressure to act can all too easily overcome the need to review and reflect. Those who have most power, most influence or prior relationships with the principal, or those who simply have most time and stamina, may come to develop and implement a vision, which they sincerely believe to be shared, that nonetheless excludes many of their colleagues. Once these differences and divisions have been established, they can become very difficult to dislodge. In our second phase of data collection, there were positive signs that these divisions were beginning to receive administrative attention. Even so, as late as December 1992, a meeting called between the Principal Investigator and a group of staff assembled by the principal and by the person who had been the Transition Years Coordinator to discuss the report of the school contained in *Secondary School Work Cultures and Educational Change,* (a meeting which was in many respects a highly productive one for people involved in it), nonetheless excluded the dissident staff voices that were located in the out-group or "Outies".

In the light of these findings about staff culture, school vision, and the subcultures which develop around innovative projects, there appear to be clear needs for strong yet sensitive school leadership which can bring teachers together as a collaborative community; for mechanisms not just to hear conflicts, but also actively to raise them and make them legitimate so they can be resolved constructively; and for processes to monitor progress and perceptions among all staff so that disappointments and disagreements can be raised and responded to.

Being in the Spotlight

Schools in the spotlight of innovation can provide valuable and visible examples of change or restructuring for other schools to sample and perhaps even to emulate in some respects. Experimental schools that provide concrete examples of restructuring can be valuable sources of professional learning for teachers working in more ordinary settings. But being in the spotlight of innovation can also expose teachers to excessive and unrealistic expectations for success from politicians and administrators who have invested heavily in a school's establishment. *Secondary School Work Cultures and Educational Change* documented investments in the success of Lincoln evidenced by the school board's expectations and the principal's own commitments, and by the teachers' own expectation of themselves.

Just as important for Lincoln teachers as those who expected the school to succeed, were those who, they felt, desperately wanted the school to fail, and who were ever watchful for signs that their wishes might come true.

> A lot of my colleagues throughout the Board, I think they are very frightened of this notion, of this wave... and they want to see us fail.... You sort of apologize for the fact that you're still standing and breathing. And I find too, in terms of discussions, that what I did had no bearing on anybody else. I really felt dismissed at that point. And I thought "if that is the kind of comment coming from the Board level where am I in the midst of all of this?".... I mean, every mistake that we have made is very public and I think that has caused fear in people too. It is like the Kurt Browning syndrome [a Canadian figure skater who many people expected to win a gold medal in the 1992 Olympics but who failed to do so]. Everybody was expecting us to win the gold or whatever.
>
> What I do hear is "why should anybody want to work that hard or want to go to that place because that's all they ever do?" I hear that kind of negative thing which really disturbs me. Or that we're perceived as doing all this work for something that's not going to happen. That lack of support. "We should be lobbying the government not to do destreaming" — that's more what I hear. I don't hear, "I wouldn't go to that place because I'm not in a position to make that kind of commitment". I hear that "I don't want to make that kind of commitment". Or, "why would you want to go there?".... I don't hear as much of it [this year].

Pressures for success and fears of failure can add to the burden of overload, and suppress necessary recognition and discussion of vulnerability and imperfection. As one teacher said, "change is a painful process to go through. Also, acknowledging that you are not perfect — that is also a very painful thing to do." Learning, and the possibility of failure and imperfection are integral to the process of successful change. When expectations for success are excessive and it is felt that some colleagues in the system are circling like vultures waiting to prey upon any hint of failure and doubt or upon evaluations that contain criticism (like this one!) which become public; these important possibilities for learning are withheld. For systems and principals alike, when restructuring efforts are being attempted, it is more important to learn than it is to succeed. Indeed, it is such learning that will lead to greater success in the long run. It is, of course, important to learn from the *successes* of "showcase" models of restructuring. But as one teacher remarked, it is equally important that other teachers learn from their *mistakes* — not, we might add, to say "I told so", or to justify leaving secondary education in its present unsatisfactory state, but in order to move forward positively and productively, in a spirit of learning from others to pursue improvement.

Professional Development

Nowhere is professional jealousy likely to flourish more strongly than in conditions where teachers in innovative, "lighthouse" schools are placed upon pedestals of pedagogical excellence. Yet so many of the political and professional expectations surrounding lighthouse schools place their teachers in precisely this position.

In high profile, innovative schools like Lincoln, teachers and principals often suffer the fate of flattery. Inundated by visitors and requests for workshops and presentations, they become givers of learning and professional development to others rather than receivers of learning and professional development themselves. This was certainly true of Lincoln, where, as we saw in our discussions of change substance, teachers talked extensively about their need for more specific professional development — especially in relation to new teaching strategies, but also in connection with reporting and mentoring skills as well. This is not to deny that experimenting with new practices and planning with one's immediate colleagues are not themselves valuable forms of professional development. Indeed, many teachers in other schools could do with less professional development in laid-on workshops and more professional development endogeneous to their own schools. But specific inservice training and access to outside expertise is also important, and Lincoln teachers very much wanted these things. All teachers need to nurture their needs as learners. This is no less true for teachers in high profile innovative schools. Neglecting the need for professional development and denying access to outside expertise in these settings not only opens these schools up to easy attributions of self-righteousness (a number of teachers in some of our other case study sites spoke critically and even resentfully about Lincoln) but also insulates their teachers from the ideas and experiences of their colleagues elsewhere that could make their own work easier and even more effective.

As we recorded in our discussion of change substance, while Lincoln's administration allowed considerable staff time, including retreats, for planning and discussion around substantive issues of program development, evaluation design and the like, it did not provide for concrete and focused training in specific skills, such as how to teach destreamed classes which teachers said they needed, but which, it seemed, it was often presumed they already had (as "chosen ones") or could develop on their own.

One teacher also mentioned an occasion where he discovered, by accident, that staff at Lincoln were not allowed to attend or present at an event organized at the Board level.

> This [event] was in the Board, on our PD day, so if you signed, you would have gone. I knew about the institute and was curious whether people from Lincoln were going to be presenting at it or in fact were going to attend because you can learn from others as well. The answer that I found out was that no one at Lincoln was allowed to go or to present because "What could you learn from other people?

When administrators deny teachers opportunities for focused professional development on specific teaching skills within and outside their own school, this may be because they already value their staffs for the high levels of expertise they already possess. But the needs for professional learning should never be underestimated:

- *for individual teachers* who, as we have seen, are often the first to identify their needs and shortcomings

- *for all teachers*, not as a form of remediation, but as part of the continued and essential process of professional growth

- *for teachers elsewhere* in the system who might then be able to see their showcased colleagues come off their pedestal, and be part of the humble community of learners with them.

What Can Be Learned from this Case?

Change Substance

Lincoln Secondary School has made valuable contributions to our understandings of the substance of change in the Transition Years. In relation to each of the four areas on which the school has specifically focused in its Grade 9 program, these contributions are:

1. *Destreaming*

- Destreaming is achievable and can be manageable. Schools like Lincoln provide concrete and creative examples of this.

- Destreaming can have real benefits for students. Lincoln's teachers were pleased with the benefits destreaming was having for most students — especially in terms of providing competent role models that lower achieving and less well-behaved students could emulate.

- Effective destreaming practice involves more than teaching to the middle, modifying programs down, or teaching three or four homogeneous groups within a supposedly heterogeneous class. It requires a range of flexible strategies that meet diverse individual needs. Examples of such practices already exist.

- Destreaming is difficult, even for the best teachers. When discipline is demanding, or teachers are tired or under pressure, reversion to more traditional teaching styles is likely.

- Teaching destreamed Grade 9 classes does not come naturally or easily even to the most skilled and committed teachers. Inservice training specifically directed towards how to teach destreamed classes is essential for virtually all teachers. This need is even greater in subjects traditionally regarded as more "linear" in nature.

- The needs of "enriched", "enhanced" or "gifted" students are particularly difficult to meet in destreamed classes. Some flexibility in the interpretation of destreaming which allows for homogeneous sub-groupings for *some* students, *some* of the time should, therefore, be countenanced as the meaning of destreaming is developed and clarified over time.

- Even at Lincoln, teachers feel that the rigours of destreaming require reductions or controls in class sizes. These can, of course, be achieved by providing additional resources, but they can also be secured by redistributing in-school resources in favour of Grade 9 and away from other (more favoured) programs and priorities. Under these circumstances, the organization of destreaming has whole-school decision-making implications that extend beyond the Grade 9 team itself.

2. *Cohorts*

- The cohort system appears to be effective and highly regarded by teachers for the ways in which it improves their knowledge of, interaction with and instructional effectiveness concerning individual students. It creates groups of students small enough for teachers to know well.

- While some students see benefits to this pattern during early adjustment to secondary school, many point to longer term costs of monotony, lack of choice, and to high school just being "more of the same" of Grade 8. A balance needs to be struck in Grade 9 between community and monotony, but we still have much to learn before achieving it.

- Effective empowerment for the cohort system as a meaningful unit of teaching and learning, requires active attention to the influence of subjects and departments on teachers' identities, commitments, work space preferences and decision-making priorities. Measures taken in favour of cohorts will have little continuing benefit if they are usurped by those whose interests and attachments are lodged in subject departments. Establishment of effective cohorts may therefore require *some* disestablishment of subject departments as the prime or overriding unit of secondary school organization and decision-making.

3. *Student Evaluation*

- Alternative and extended systems of evaluation and reporting encourage teachers to know their students better and can provide grounds for better dialogue with parents.

- The alternative evaluation system has revealed the immense difficulties of creating systems more *meaningful* than crude letters and grades accompanied by terse comments, yet more *manageable* than complex and time-consuming grids and scales. Balancing meaningfulness with manageability remains a profound challenge for systems of student evaluation.

- As we saw in Volume 2, students are more often targets of rather than participants in evaluation. There are dangers of using alternative patterns of evaluation merely to judge students more extensively rather than involving students in the evaluation process which would allow them to become more effective partners in their own learning, help teachers diagnose their needs more effectively, and offer meaningful feedback about the quality of program and instruction they are receiving.

- Lincoln's case points emphatically to the need for focused, specific staff training on techniques of and formats for effective student evaluation.

- The voices of students and parents articulate a need for clear standards, benchmarks or criteria to be identified in school reports which give anecdotal comments and complex ratings of student skills a clear, and explicit context for interpretation.

4. *The Mentor Program*

- The mentor program holds out promise for personal development for students, but still carries connotations of dependency.

- Mentor roles demand much of teachers' personal skills. Poor execution of the role can lead students to see it as false or contrived. Mentor systems should therefore probably not be countenanced as a serious proposition in the Transition Years unless the commitment is sufficient to provide appropriate inservice training in individual and small-group counselling skills.

Change Process

Any school approaching restructuring on the scale undertaken by Lincoln must expect to encounter profound difficulties as a matter of course. No strategy of successful change or creation will eliminate all these difficulties. It will only make them more manageable. Some of the difficulties may be permanent, chronic features of the model adopted — and lead to critical questions about the suitability of that model. Others will be temporary problems, characteristics of the much cited "implementation dip" (Fullan, 1991) — and be surmountable as a result. While we have identified a number of problematic features we believe to be endemic to the model of creation or change embraced by Lincoln, only longer-term study will ultimately distinguish problems inherent to the change, from problems arising from the first two years of its implementation.

By Phase 2 of our study, there were suggestions that some of the problems we identified earlier were problems of early implementation beyond which the school showed signs of moving. For instance, all teachers noted that discipline had improved with the addition of Grade 11 role models, and after concentrated attention from the staff. Commitment to the mentoring program for students had been cut back to reduce the spread of teachers' efforts. The evaluation system continued to be modified and by December 1992, was being examined for the possibilities of computerization. We have seen how one teacher described how planning units for cooperative learning had exhausted her at first, but she was now beginning to be able to improvise. And some teachers were beginning to rebuild the personal dimensions of their lives after initially overextending themselves in their commitments to their work. Only longer term study will successfully disentangle how far other problems are endemic features of the change model or specifically attributable to the implementation dip.

However one evaluates Lincoln's record, the special conditions of its establishment as a new school (and all the accompanying implications for space, design and materials) with Pilot Project Funding, and with a particular mix of "chosen" staff severely limit its wholesale transposability to other settings. As one teacher said, "we've had money to do things. You know we have a hand picked staff, you've got people who wanted to do this. You can't duplicate this out there. And so, I think, there are going to be some real problems when people try to do it."

Lincoln Secondary School has shown that other ways of organizing a secondary school aside from the existing norm are possible. It has challenged and disturbed the ingrained and hegemonically accepted notions of what secondary school teaching and organization must look like. This is what lighthouse schools can uniquely achieve. The Lincoln lighthouse has brought together excellent and seemingly inexhaustible teachers in a brave and bold experiment of multiple innovation characterized by rapid pace and extensive scope. Whilst the substance of change has helped break the existing paradigms of what secondary schools must look like in ways that will surely help other schools, the change process is so overwhelmingly demanding that it has taxed even Lincoln teachers to the limit. As Lincoln teachers themselves recognized, this change process would almost certainly not be effective with teachers who have less time and energy, more commitments in and to their personal lives, greater doubts or less clarity about the purposes of the Transition Years, less support from their principals and their colleagues, and less human and material resources to smooth the path of innovation.

The lighthouse model of change will always be instructive as an instrument of professional learning that breaks apart existing assumptions of what secondary schools must look like. It will therefore always have a contribution to make as a minority pattern of change, if its role is clearly understood. Lincoln has some lessons even for how this lighthouse model itself might be developed more effectively. These include:

- needs for greater lead-in time to build a collaborative staff community that can tolerate the stresses of change;
- continuous awareness of and active attention to conflict as a necessary part of the change process;
- open staff reflection on issues of change process (how they feel, how they are doing, etc.) as well as change substance;
- continuous development and monitoring of a *shared* vision among *all staff*;
- unceasing efforts to include *all* staff in decision-making, to consult those who cannot always participate directly, and to appreciate the different levels of time and commitment that teachers can give (thereby avoiding divisions between "Innies" and "Outies" and the process of implementation by stamina that comes with that);

- avoiding overload by ensuring that the scope of innovation being undertaken, while suitably ambitious for a lighthouse school, is also manageable by those concerned;
- ensuring that the commitment to restructuring does not eclipse the more mundane lessons of school effectiveness — for instance, by maintaining a safe and orderly environment for learning in the school;
- promoting continued professional development and inservice training for teachers, even those who seem particularly excellent and innovative — in order to learn specific new skills, to become even better at using them, and to be visible learners from (and not just models for) teachers elsewhere in the system.

The advantage of lighthouses is that they illuminate the educational imagination with vivid yet practical images of change. Their disadvantage is that they can place other teachers in shadows of inferiority and inadequacy from which they feel they cannot escape. As imaginative, creative and illuminative experiments, lighthouses have immense value. As models to be transposed relatively directly to other, more ordinary settings, they have little value at all. These are the lessons of the lighthouse. They are ones that administrators should weigh with very great care.

5.

SHORELINE SECONDARY SCHOOL: A SCHOOL-BASED TRANSITION YEARS PROJECT

By

Elizabeth Smyth and Dona Matthews

Introduction

In selecting the sites for case study, we sought to represent a variety of experiences of teachers and students throughout the province. Shoreline Secondary School was selected because it possessed elements which were common across all sites and contained unique elements which we identified as adding to the richness of the project. This case details the experience of a sample of teachers and students of Shoreline Secondary School and two of its elementary feeder schools in grappling with issues emerging from the Transition Years Initiatives. For teachers, it is a study of transitions in professional practices and outlooks. For students, it is a study of transitions in development and relocation in learning environments, a study of the passage from their elementary to their secondary school lives.

The teachers studied in this case include the elementary and secondary teachers, the department heads, principals and centrally assigned support staff. For them, the Transition Years Pilot Project at Shoreline Secondary School is a story of the coming together of the elementary and secondary school panels to address the educational realities created by societal change, and in response to the provincial restructuring initiatives. It is a story of individual and collective reflection as teachers assess their personal and professional skills to determine how they can better meet the needs of their students.

This case is a microcosm of professionals in transition. The participants in the case study are all highly committed, experienced educators — well-respected by their colleagues and their students. They represent the array of opinions currently held by Ontario educators. There are believers and skeptics, visionaries and entrenched resistors — all actively involved in assessing, implementing, and coping with change to improve the learning environment for their students and themselves.

For the students in the case, change is neither threatening nor pervasive. The transition from elementary to secondary school was viewed with minimum apprehension. Instead it was regarded with great anticipation. Even for the small group of students within the sample for whom the transition from elementary to secondary school involved relocation into a different cultural and geographic milieu, the transition was viewed as a positive experience.

The Transition Years Pilot Project at Shoreline Secondary School and its two feeder schools was a positive experience of personal and professional growth for the teachers and students we interviewed. This is not to say that there were and are not challenges and unresolved issues, especially on the part of the teachers. Feelings of fear, anger and disempowerment, directed not toward the school or the school board, but toward the government and the Ministry of Education and Training, lay close to the surface. Fears that the Initiative of which they are a part was ill-conceived, poorly-supported, and lacked the support of the majority of their colleagues, were articulated to the researchers. The teachers all support change in practice — but how the change will be brought about remains a question that is both fundamental and amorphous.

Context

Shoreline Secondary School is an urban composite high school located in a medium-sized city in northern Ontario. It was chosen as an investigative site for several reasons. First, the Transition Years Pilot Project was school-generated. Secondly, the school board has experienced both declining enrolment and the transfer of schools to the Separate School Board; this has had a major impact on the teaching population. Thirdly, Shoreline Secondary School's enrolment includes a small but significant number of Native students. Finally, Shoreline Secondary School draws from both urban and rural feeder schools.

The student population at Shoreline Secondary School is approximately 1100, streamed from Grade 9 to OAC, with 45% of the students enrolled in Advanced level, 52% in General level, and 3% in Basic level. Approximately 14% of the students are "regional students", who come from remote or Native communities as far away as 500 km. The staff includes 80 teachers, 49 males and 31 females, many of whom are approaching retirement; the average age is 50.5 and the average teaching experience is 26 years.

Founded in the first half of this century, the school has a lengthy history of involvement with innovation. These innovations have included offering night school programs for adults, pioneering models for semestering, developing culturally sensitive programs to meet the needs of its multicultural students, and creating flexible scheduling to enable students to take courses at neighbouring high schools.

Shoreline Secondary School's Transition Years Pilot Project

The Board of Education within which Shoreline Secondary School operates used a school-based approach to the Ministry of Education's call for pilot projects. Schools were asked to generate projects which were then proportionally funded. Thus, the project at Shoreline Secondary School was one of several which received small amounts of funding. While there was a centrally-assigned Transition Years Co-ordinator at the school board level, each site had a project manager responsible for on-site operation and administration. The two components of the Transition Years initiatives addressed at the pilot project at Shoreline Secondary School were Student Services and Core Curriculum.

The Student Services component directly involved the staff of the secondary school counselling department, the intermediate division teachers, the school administrators, some Grade 9 students at Shoreline, and all students in Grades 7 and 8 in the three elementary feeder schools. This component consisted of:

- cross-panel visitations of counsellors, teachers, and students;
- opportunities for Grade 8 students to "shadow" Grade 9 students for a day;
- three days of "fishbowl" delivery of elementary programs to elementary students in a secondary setting;
- ongoing communication between the high school (Student Services and the administrative team), and the elementary schools (parents, intermediate division teachers and the administrators).

The majority of these activities represented an enhancement of previous practices.

Addressing the second component — Core Curriculum — represented an exploration of significant change, and also created opportunities for teacher growth. In their May, 1991, year-end report, the staff of Shoreline Secondary School wrote:

> The curriculum connection was also a good team-building process. It appears that the secondary teachers can benefit from the experiences of

> elementary teachers. . . . teams developed thematic units which have been used in actual classroom situations.

By design, the number of teachers involved in the Core Curriculum component was limited. The interaction consisted of one-to-one communication between individual teachers crossing panels. This decision demonstrates an understanding of the complexity of the change process. While other pilot projects may have appeared to address more substantive change issues, this project effected real -- though small — changes in practice. These changes emerged out of, and were consistent with, an overall climate of encouraging meaningful innovation in response to student needs.

After a description of the method, this case report will outline

- the experiences of the teachers in this project within the Core Curriculum component;
- the experiences of the students in this project within the Student Services component.

Method: Pilot Project Review

Data Collection

Data collection depended upon and involved co-operation among the various participants. Multiple methods were employed: focus groups, structured interviews, shadowing, classroom observation, informal observations, and discussion. Interview schedules were common across all case study sites across the province. The research process included ample opportunities to interact, both formally and informally, with students, parents, teachers and other stakeholders in the community and the Board of Education. Informing methods of data collection were recent works by Fullan (1991), Gilligan, Lyons, & Hanmer (1990), Krueger (1988), and Schön (1987).

Data collection and analysis were undertaken in a constant interactive process; observation preceded and followed from analysis, each informing the other. Open, engaged discourse regarding this study and the Transition Years initiatives was continuous between the researchers, and among the participants and the researcher. The researchers' backgrounds in counselling and interviewing, consistent with the qualitative focus of this study, led to a decision to employ techniques of active listening as a means of eliciting the participants' lived experience of the pilot project.

The researchers' time was deployed over one week among three schools: Shoreline Secondary School; Seaview Elementary School, an urban feeder school; and Sandy Road Elementary School, a rural feeder school. A third elementary feeder school was not included in this study because of limitations of time and changes in personnel at that school. Indicative of the interest in the research and a general atmosphere of openness was the fact that several teachers and students at all of the schools independently approached the researchers to offer their opinions and observations.

Sample

Students, teachers, administrators, and other participants were included in this study. All participants were well prepared to discuss the Transition Years initiatives with the researchers. The interviews were audiotaped and transcribed. Individuals not directly participating as subjects in the study sought out the researchers to voice their opinions. These conversations were documented in field notes and were not audiotaped.

Teachers

In each of the two elementary sites, one teacher was interviewed in depth, and observed in his/her classrooms. In each of these schools, two other teachers were also informally observed, and informal discussions were held with several others. Three secondary teachers were interviewed in depth, and observed in their classrooms. Six secondary teachers (including the three who had been interviewed) participated in a focus group. In addition, over a dozen discussions were held with other teachers in a variety of settings (staff room, office, cloak room, hallways, gymnasium, classrooms, and science and technical laboratories). All teachers formally interviewed and observed were members of the Transition Years Pilot Project.

Students

Three categories of students were included in the observations and focus groups: Grade 8 students, Grade 9 students, and Native students. These students were selected by the Transition Years team as representing a range of ability levels and attitudes, and were balanced by sex. The Grade 9 students were also selected to represent each of the three feeder schools which had participated in the pilot project.

At each of the two elementary schools, the researchers shadowed Grade 8 students, who then participated in a focus group. At the secondary level, three Grade 9 students were shadowed, and interviewed in depth. In addition, two focus group sessions were conducted. One of these comprised three Native students. The other included six Grade 9 (non-Native) students. These students had participated in Shoreline's Transition Years Pilot Project in their elementary schools.

Informal discussions were held with many other students at various points in the week of data collection, as they were encountered in various extra- and co-curricular activities, between and during classes, in the office, and in informal settings. These data were used to inform, support, and validate researchers' understandings of students' transition years experience.

Administrators

The researchers met the principals of all schools, and discussed their schools' involvement in this project. The principal of the high school, as a member of the Transition Years team, participated in an in-depth interview. The Transition Years co-ordinator at the school board level was a subject in an indepth interview. Senior school board administrators met in an informal setting, and shared their observations of the pilot projects.

Other Participants

The social worker who serves as the Native students' counsellor was the subject of an indepth interview. The researchers also had an opportunity to discuss the impact of the Transition Years Project with several parents.

The Teachers' Experience

Origins of the Project

The Transition Years Pilot Project at Shoreline Secondary School was conceived and initiated by members of the secondary school staff. Discussions among the staff concerning how the school could restructure its program more effectively to meet the needs of its Grade 9 students predated the Ministry of Education and Training's call for Transition Years Pilot Projects.

A model for a restructured Grade 9 program which would include integrated subject areas in a team-teaching situation had been discussed by a small core of teachers for several years. As one teacher commented, when the model was first presented it was:

> ...certainly premature and it frightened people. The superintendents did not want to enter into this project at that time. They were also hoping it would go away.

The model did not go away. When the Board of Education called for Transition Years pilot projects, with an announced initial annual budget of $40,000, this model served as the basis for discussion among Shoreline Secondary School and its feeder schools. A cross-panel team of teachers and administrators proposed a pilot project. The goals of the pilot would be facilitating student transitions from elementary to secondary school and facilitating cross-panel communication and methodological experimentation. The Shoreline proposal entered the Board-wide competition. After all the proposals were received, the steering committee decided that, rather than funding one site, it would fund many sites. As a member of the centrally assigned board staff explained:

> If you choose one particular site then other sites would have felt left out . . . We sensed that there was a lot of opposition . . . and we thought that maybe we could defuse that a great deal by having a project in nearly every secondary school . . . so that they really became familiar with it. The fright and the anxiety they felt would not be as pronounced. . . also we wanted teachers to feel that they were part of the process and involve as many as possible.

Shoreline Secondary School was placed in an awkward position. One of the secondary teachers described the situation:

> We wanted all of [the money] to do . . . a large project with time and money. And our board chose to, instead of assigning the whole $40,000 to one, . . . they funded minimally everyone's project . . . We went ahead with a modified program.

Shoreline Secondary School adapted its proposal. The "modified program" remained focused on the two components of Student Services and Core Curriculum, with the scope of the Core Curriculum component significantly downsized. Rather than a program that would be interdisciplinary and integrated among arts and science and technologies, the Core Curriculum component took on a different shape:

> We expanded the group beyond the steering committee. We brought in a history teacher, an English teacher and a math teacher who were interested in examining the concept of the Transition Years. We paired up people in the elementary panel. They jointly planned units and activities where the secondary people went into the elementary panel to assist with the planning and also the delivery. Then they reciprocated.

Core Curriculum, thus defined, was the vehicle for cross-panel linkages.

Cross Panel Linkages: The Courtship Ritual

One of the major achievements of this pilot is the extent to which cross-panel communication developed among the participants. As one teacher commented,

> There is no culture in our system of secondary and elementary teachers working together.

Trust had to be built among the teachers. The component called Core Curriculum became the vehicle for building trust across the panels.

Core Curriculum was perceived by many of the secondary teachers as one the most critical and problematic issues within the Transition Years initiatives. As one teacher queried:

> The big challenge for us in the secondary school is, what do we mean by Core Curriculum? Is Core Curriculum English, Math, Science? Is it a group of subjects or is it a thematic approach? Are we talking about a thematic approach that would involve an integrated curriculum?

The team decided to focus on integrated units as a means of exploring the meaning of Core Curriculum. Each of two cross-panel pairs of teachers were to develop an integrated unit of study collaboratively . These units would then be taught in a cross-panel setting: the elementary teacher would deliver the unit in a secondary class, and the secondary teacher would deliver the unit in an elementary class.

For the cross-panel teams to develop an integrated unit of study collaboratively, trust had to be built. One teacher used the metaphor of courtship:

> There was an awkward pause . . . They needed some time to sort of touch each other . . . It was like a courtship of an adolescent . . . I guess the secondary school was sort of mating, trying to dance around the perimeters of the elementary school.

Fear and resistance had to be overcome. Misconceptions had to be addressed before any productive collaboration could begin. All of the secondary teachers commented on the initial fears which they perceived on the part of the elementary teachers:

> It was interesting, the progression. The elementary people were very reluctant to have us walk into their classrooms. You could really sense this. It was them and it was us, and we really wanted to share and to see what they could offer us, and they were suspicious. Like, what do these guys want to watch our classes for?

This theme recurred. As another secondary teacher commented,

> One of the issues . . . was the reluctance of the elementary school people to have secondary people just watching. But the secondary people felt that they weren't skilled enough. But the elementary people thought they were being evaluated and the secondary people thought they didn't have enough skills to be involved in the organization and planning of the lesson.

Once these issues were confronted, the teachers recognized that they had all been operating under misperceptions:

> We found that there were some assumptions that we both made about each others' way. Actually our attitudes towards each other were unfounded.

Ironically, the focus on Core Curriculum, and the tapping of the expertise of the elementary panel, served to reinforce two new and growing misperceptions:

- the Transition Years initiatives were addressing problems that were occurring only at the secondary school level, and
- the elementary level teachers were already "doing it right".

One elementary teacher described the first meeting that the team had:

> We were given a little package of excerpts from the *The Transition Years* [discussion paper] because many of us, myself included, had never seen the actual document . . . It was more of a presentation than a discussion at the beginning which was fine, because those secondary people had a lot of background on it, because it was affecting them directly. It wasn't affecting us.

Unfortunately, working with the secondary school teachers throughout the project only served to confirm this misperception. Another elementary teacher commented,

> A lot of people were panicking, and are panicking, at the secondary school level. At the elementary school we saw ourselves as in a helping role . . . how we as the elementary school teachers could be instrumental in helping the secondary teachers deal with this . . . We felt a little smug because for so many years we had been looked upon as the daycare centre. We would look after the kids long enough for the secondary school to get a hold of them and really educate them. To suddenly have a situation where people were saying to us 'Please show us how to do this' was an interesting turn of events.

In short, as an elementary teacher said,

> It won't affect us . . . From what I read in the document, and certainly I confirm that even more so now, the things that are talked about in the document regarding destreaming, regarding the integration and so on . . . We are already doing that.

A secondary teacher saw the same experience from a slightly different perspective. Reflecting on the anticipation of developing an integrated unit with an elementary teacher, the secondary teacher remembered rhetorically asking,

> Am I so specialized that I have lost my math skills, my grammar skills, et cetera? Will I be able to jump right into that situation? Am I going to look fairly incompetent here?

Synthesizing his overall experience, the secondary teacher said the feelings were the

> same as the elementary teacher [who] feels somewhat inadequate about coming into a high school and having to know so much about one subject. It's just kind a lack of communication too.

This teacher saw a pervasive lack of understanding between panels. Working with a cross-panel partner in each other's building led this teacher to begin to understand the differences in culture between secondary and elementary schools. New perceptions grew out of this experience.

Metaphors of Open and Closed Doors

Those teachers developing the integrated units of study with their cross-panel partners had many opportunities to reflect on the nature of their respective learning/working environments. In the researchers' interviews with teachers, open and closed doors were often used as metaphors to describe teachers' contrasting perceptions of the learning environment in the elementary and secondary panels. The closed door was used as a metaphor by both secondary and elementary teachers to describe the isolation of the secondary school teacher. The secondary school teacher was described as working as an individual, not as part of a team, interacting with cohorts of students that entered into the closed environment of the secondary school classroom, and departed after a fixed period of time. This contrasted with the open doors in the elementary schools, used to symbolize the perceived openness and collegiality of the elementary school teacher. The elementary teacher was characterized as open and flexible, with both students and teachers flowing freely from subject to subject and interacting more informally, co-operatively, and frequently.

Working with a secondary school learning partner, an elementary teacher observed:

> Most of the doors are closed once class is in session...[which represents] specialization and a lack of team playing.

This teacher went on to comment:

> Secondary teachers, other than within their departments, have never really had to work together to achieve their curriculum. If I was a

> secondary school teacher . . . I could very well have my classes come in, close the door, teach the subject, tell them what I expected in terms of assignments, and open the door and let them out, and bring in the next class.

Secondary teachers described a culture of individual effort, even isolation:

> We have all been in classrooms all by ourselves. We have minimal contact with the head of the department . . . So you do it in your classroom.

When the secondary school teachers do work together it is at a department level. As a department head reflected:

> There has always been a lot of sharing, usually one-to-one. Not so much the whole department having to skip with the same rope.

Individualism is valued. Interaction is often one-on-one. The department is there to lend structure and support to individuals' efforts. Along with the strength associated with the departmental structure, there are also shortcomings. A department head observed:

> I guess [what] I'm learning from the Transition [Project], as much as from anywhere, is that we are very departmentalized. I'm next door to the Xxx Department, yet talking to them as teacher to teacher, we don't do a lot of sharing of strategies. I guess we often feel we are working with different worlds . . . I am probably no more guilty than any other department or department head, in that we get very segregated by the nature of our courses.

The realization that the department structure is restrictive to growth is one thing; attempting to remediate it is another. A secondary teacher identified the issue as one of time:

> I don't get much time to spend time in classrooms of my fellow teachers, although I'm often visiting them between classes . . . I do tend to be caught up more in what's happening in the (main) office and my sphere.

Teaching in an area where doors are open — and teachers are seen as open to change — is perceived as a strength of the elementary panel. A secondary teacher observed:

> We should be learning this from elementary people. The [classroom] door should be more open in the learning climate. They seem to have

> much more access to each others' rooms and comfort level. I have never had trouble with people coming in. It's just that you always sense that it may change the climate of your room or of the students. It may seem like an interruption. People tend not to do it.

These observations are not representative of all schools. There are many elementary classrooms, particularly in the intermediate division, that operate behind the same closed doors that have been attributed only to the secondary schools. One could also point to the secondary schools where the closed door is the exception, and not the rule. Nonetheless, the metaphors of open and closed doors are worth considering. They can be seen as symbolizing the need which many of the secondary school teachers expressed: a desire to move beyond individual classrooms, and break down the barriers across subject areas, grade levels, and panels.

The Students' Experience

Student interviews, shadowing, and focus groups in both the elementary and secondary panels were used to collect data on the Student Services component of the Transition Years Pilot Project. The objective of this component was to ease the transition between elementary and secondary schools. The students in Grade 9 had participated in the project during their Grade 8 year. Because the current Grade 8 students were in the midst of preparation for the transition to Grade 9, the data reported rely more heavily on the Grade 9 students.

The consensus among Grade 9 students was that transition from elementary school to Shoreline Secondary School had not been very problematic. In fact, their transition was reported as having been more enjoyable than stressful. This can be seen partly as a result of the Pilot Project activities, and partly as a result of programs, services, and attitudes that were already in place at the secondary school.

The Academic Transition

All of the students in the Grade 9 focus group had been surprised to find that high school was "really not that bad". Students reported that their Grade 8 teachers had told them that the high school teachers were "really hard", and:

> that the [high school] teachers don't really care, and they don't help you and all this. And if you don't get your homework done, they don't care.

Their Grade 9 experience proved otherwise. Students reported that their high school teachers cared about them. According to one student:

> My Grade 8 teacher told us as well that the [secondary] teachers didn't care. I guess most of the Grade 8 teachers tell you that, but they [secondary teachers] all do [care].

In fact, the students reported that they had met many "good teachers" in their Grade 9 year.

The Good Teacher

A lively discussion was generated when the Grade 9 students were asked to define what they meant by a "good teacher". The students' opinions were well-considered, strongly-held, and reflective of their desire to participate in the learning experience. Good teachers provided students with learning environments which were active, hands-on, and experiential. Students did not want to be dictated to or lectured at. These opinions are consistent with the findings reported by Hargreaves and Earl (1990) in their review of the literature on early adolescence, and add a new voice — these students' — to those advocating the importance of student involvement in the learning process.

According to the students in the Grade 9 focus group, good teachers are enthusiastic and engaged in the teaching process. Good teachers work innovatively and energetically to engage students in the learning process. Good teachers are not "boring":

> [Boring means] just getting your notes off the board. Having to copy them. Just reading your textbook, and copying notes down. You don't get interested in it at all. You just do it automatically, but when [teachers] start doing demonstrations, like, you want to learn about it.

It was reported that "boredom" is used by some teachers as a threat, as a method of discipline:

> At the beginning of the year, [one of my teachers] just told us that he wasn't going to be boring and write notes on the board. Like, we were going to do experiments and all that. But if we are bad, he will start doing that.

Good teachers combine understanding with a sense of humour. After the other students had agreed that English is a "boring" subject, one said:

> I had a good [English] teacher last semester, so it made it kind of fun...She would explain everything, like when we were reading *Romeo and Juliet*. So we understood it. And she always made jokes about everything. Like, she was really funny.

Good teachers are respectful of students' developing autonomy. They encourage participation in decision-making:

> [Good teachers] treat you as if you are a little bit more mature than you were in Grade 8.
>
> They care about you. Like, they just don't give you work and just say do it.
>
> [Good teachers] make the kids, like, *want* to learn. Like, make it interesting and make sure [they] listen to their [students'] opinions and stuff.

Students agreed that the majority of teachers they had met at Shoreline Secondary School were good teachers.

September as a Time of Transition

When asked to think back to their anticipation of coming to high school, some of the Grade 9 students remembered being afraid of change. They feared getting lost in the much bigger crowd of people in the much bigger building. All the students said that this fear had been considerably assuaged by spending a day in the high school while they were in Grade 8. Most important for them was the day they had spent shadowing a Grade 9 student, a pilot project activity. As one student said,

> I think the best thing that happened was when we followed them [the Grade 9 students] around. That probably helped the most. Because you actually got to experience it while you were there. Just following them around.

When asked about concerns experienced in the first weeks of school, the students mentioned the pranks associated with orientation. Though officially outlawed by the administration, students saw "getting perfume on the head" ("the cheap stuff"), and "shaving cream and stuff like that" as part of the rite of passage into the secondary school community. They all agreed that it was not too serious, "that you have to kind of expect it", "that it is kind of like a welcome". Significantly, they all planned to participate in so "welcoming" next years' Grade 9 students.

Students' Reactions to the Prospect of Destreaming

Grade 9 students were unanimous in their opinion that the General, Basic, and Advanced level differentiation best serves all students' needs. The students articulated their belief that destreaming would not do so. This was true across all levels, across dozens of students who were encountered in a variety of places in and around the school. The most-frequently elicited reaction was that destreaming would be bad for all students, but especially those prepared to study at the Advanced levels and those who needed the slower pace of instruction that Basic level classes offer. When asked to describe how destreaming would work, one representative student replied:

> It would probably be a General level class. Like, right in the middle. So the Basic kids [*sic*] would probably have trouble with it. Well, it would be too difficult for them. Like, they wouldn't be able to keep up or something. And the Advanced kids [*sic*] would find it really easy.

The Native Students' Experience

One of the unique elements in Shoreline Secondary School's student population is the presence of a cohort of Native students. These students attend Shoreline Secondary School by choice; many of them graduate along with their non-Native age-peers, in spite of tremendous cultural and geographical forces working against this success (Mackay & Myles, 1989).

Many of Shoreline Secondary School's Native students are from fly-in communities, that is, communities with no road access. To attend high school, they come to the city, often for the first time, and move into boarding houses. This would be an immense transition for any Grade 9 student, but for these students, who also experience profound cultural differences, it might well be considered insurmountable. Nonetheless, out of ten to fifteen new students every year, five or so are graduating.

A Native student focus group was conducted, in which the students were asked about their transition to Shoreline Secondary School. They were a quieter group than the non-Native students, and appeared shy and uncomfortable speaking with the researchers. This improved when the tape recorder was turned off.

Consequently, there are only written notes, and no taped records or transcriptions; Native students' comments will be paraphrased and summarized.

The Native students felt for the most part that their transition to Shoreline had gone very well. They attributed this success to the work of a Native counsellor resident at Shoreline Secondary School, and the generally supportive atmosphere at Shoreline Secondary School. Three aspects of Student Services were cited as significant:

- First, the Native counsellor visited them in their home communities in the spring before Grade 9, taking a videotape of the Shoreline Secondary School and the city experience (a tape which had been made by Native students already at Shoreline). While there, the counsellor assisted them and their parents in filling out the school forms and setting up timetables.
- Then, the students visited the school for a few days in the spring. They paired up with someone from their home community when possible, and thereby experienced the school and the community before moving to the city.
- Finally, the students felt that there was considerable warmth and acceptance within the school, as exemplified by a Friday noon-time Friendship Circle, and courses in Native Art, Language, History, as well as English as a Second Language, and their own counsellor and office.

These students were aware that high schools vary tremendously in their approaches to meeting the needs of Native students. They were unanimous in their appreciation for what was happening at Shoreline Secondary School. One must remember that these students were the ones who are experiencing success. Nonetheless, they spoke of other secondary school experiences that they had had or knew about, situations that had been devastating failures in every way: academically, socially, and psychologically. The students attributed much of their success at Shoreline Secondary School to the support systems facilitated through the Native counsellor.

The Native Students' Counsellor

The Native students' counsellor participated in an indepth interview with the researchers. The counsellor has a quiet and attentive manner, and although not Native, is highly conversant with and respectful of the various Native cultures. It is likely that these attributes contribute substantially to success with the Native students. The counsellor is a social worker, strongly committed to the Native students, and highly appreciative of the programs and attitudes in place at Shoreline. When asked to describe the transition experienced by Native students, the counsellor replied:

> There is a lot of support in the school with the special programs that are offered here. The teachers are trying very much to be understanding of Native culture. But I think no matter how much support there is in the school or from their parents back home, the adjustment is still going to be difficult. There are things that can help that adjustment.

The counsellor went on to describe the elements identified by the students:

> [Some communities], thank goodness, budget for an orientation. Because that is so important...I usually go up there to do the school presentation, bring slides and videotape. And then I bring a school year calendar. This is a timetable, just everything that is available in the school...Then I go around with the translator to the families to get the signature...I would rather go with someone with the community so that things are not misinterpreted...And then in May, [the Grade 8 students] usually come out. The water breaks up, it is break-up time and they can get out. So in May, they would come here to attend school for maybe three days of classes, the ones who have filled in the option sheets...We buddy them up with somebody...somebody that they know. And courses, maybe, that they filled out to take next year, so that they have some idea of what is going on.

As would be expected, the transition is not always smooth or easy:

> Initially when [the students] come here, it is fun. It is new. Sometimes some students by the end of the first week, the second week, at some time in September, it will really hit them that they miss the life that they were accustomed to back home. That is usually the time when students will want to quit school and they will want to give up. I usually say to them that the first semester in the new school will be the

> longest semester in your life. It will seem like it will never end, or that you are never going to get home for Christmas holidays. It will be the worst semester.

Even with the best of orientations, there are still many problems and obstacles for these students, with tremendous cultural, social, home, and academic transitions happening simultaneously with the normal adolescent transition. Things that are simple and taken for granted by children who have been raised in an urban culture can be foreign and frightening to many Native students.

The counsellor spoke of the diversity of Native students' paths through high school. Some Native students arrive at secondary school with gaps in their learning. Others come with their own young children, and childcare is a challenge. The counsellor observed different attendance and graduation patterns:

> Some of the students graduate after four years, some after six years...I have noticed most of the boarding students do not graduate after the fourth year...Some of them have quit once, and then come back again the second time, and have stayed with it.

The counsellor was asked if Shoreline Secondary School was typical in its Native services, and replied:

> It is not typical of a high school for Native students, because they have opened their doors to the Native students. And they have very much acknowledged and accepted their presence here. I am very grateful that that has happened.

The transition experience of Native students at Shoreline Secondary School is indicative of the commitment which the staff has to better meeting the needs of its students. Although not directly a part of the Transition Years initiatives, this component demonstrates the extent to which the existing school culture is facilitative of ongoing innovation and responsiveness to students' cognitive and affective needs.

What Have We Learned from the Shoreline Project?

The Transition Years initiatives are about change. As part of Ontario's attempt to restructure its education, both teachers and students are grappling with both the process and the substance of change. The learnings from this case will be set out in two categories: Change Process and Change Substance. Under Change Process, the following will be discussed:

- The Many Meanings Of Transition
- Recognition Of The Need For Change In Practice
- The Critical Role Of Leadership
- Reactions To Change: Challenges And Concerns

Under Change Substance, these topics will be discussed:

- Exploring Core Curriculum: Cross-Panel Linkages
- Student Services
- Destreaming

Change Process

The Many Meanings of Transition

The Transition Years initiatives were interpreted by teachers in many and various ways. Predominantly, although certainly not exclusively, "Transition Years" meant destreaming Grade 9, and possibly 10. As one teacher explained:

> I think that Transition and Destreaming have become married together in a hyphenated situation. Today, people are associating the two concepts as one.

In addition to this unidimensional construct, interpretations of the Transition Years initiatives ranged from the complex and inclusive —

> The whole concept of transition from one phase of one's development into another.

through the programmatic —

> The planning of strategies that are going to enable teachers . . . to deal with individual needs in a classroom setting where there will be students of great varying ability.

to the externally imposed and professionally disruptive —

> [The purpose of the Transition Years initiatives is to], I could use the word convert, but certainly convince, a lot of the staff who have spent all their career developing strategies that they feel are suitable only for Basic/General level or Advanced level deliverance.

Recognizing the Need for Change in Practice

The teachers at Shoreline Secondary School and its two feeder schools described their motivation for participating in the Transition Years Pilot Project as:

- the need to better address the needs of their students, and
- the need to better address their own learning needs.

These teachers recognized that their professional practice must change to accommodate the realities of a changing society.

The teachers in the sample had considerable professional experience, the majority with well over 20 years of teaching. They observed that a shift had taken place in the orientation of their practice over those years. A secondary school teacher described the shift this way:

> When I began teaching, I felt that I was teaching a craft . . . that was my role to interest people in [my subject area]. I now know that my job is simply to interest them in learning, work on their personality development, their self image . . . I can use [my subject] as a vehicle to do a lot of that. Spend time talking about issues that matter and help them to talk about and think about issues that should help them.

Another secondary educator described the impact of the changing environment on the role of the teacher:

> I have seen some changes pedagogically where the teachers and most of the classroom environment was all directed by the teacher . . .The teacher was the 'sage on the stage', and the teacher was the imparter of knowledge. The students were there to receive that knowledge, to manipulate it, and then to give it back.

An elementary teacher reiterated the need to think about practice in terms of the needs of the students:

> We seem to be spending in elementary school anyhow more time helping kids with social needs. Giving them ways to cope with family situations that I don't remember being as involved when I first started to teach. Because if a child is hungry or if the child hasn't spent the night at home because something has happened, it is difficult to teach, to get through the baggage.

In spite of their questions about the specific Initiatives mandated by the Ministry of Education and Training, the teachers in this pilot project recognized the need for change in educational practice at early adolescence. They used this pilot project as an opportunity to explore the nature of the required changes.

The Critical Role of Leadership

The Transition Years project at Shoreline Secondary School could best be described as a secondary-driven project, with the principal and the Transition Years team leader playing key roles. The role of the principal both as leader and supporter was highlighted by many of teachers. As one teacher said,

> The principal . . . is always working for a better way of doing things. . . is also looking down the road and . . . believes that this document will be a reality. In spite of the objections of many people [the principal] wants to be prepared for it when it happens.

The principal was described as being supportive of those teachers interested in change:

> The support has been tremendous. . . [the secondary principal] is a believer, and so are the others who work in [the Transition Years] program. So people make the difference.

The principal commented that it was essential that the leadership of this initiative be shared among the staff in the school through members of the Transition Team. The principal described the steering committee as:

> Powerful people, and they are people I think who are intelligent enough to do the reading, to do the critical reflective thinking and to be an inspiration, I think, for other people on staff.

This project was locally generated. Leadership was at a school-based level. By design, the cross-panel team received little direction from the school board office. As a member of the central office staff described:

> My involvement was telling them that they are doing okay, encouraging them to get to know each other more. My involvement was very peripheral. It wasn't all that pronounced. That was, again, done on purpose.

The principal was both a strong supporter of the Transition Years pilot and able to allow the Transition Years team to operate autonomously. The principal was seen by the teachers as a key element in a school atmosphere that is generally conducive to thoughtful change. The principal emphasized shared leadership, and was committed to involving teachers in the school's decision-making on a variety of levels. The principal appeared to be successful in establishing a climate of collaborative work relationships among teachers, and worked actively to empower teachers in initiating and responding to change. This positive climate may help to explain why transition to this school does not appear to be an issue for the Grade 9 students.

Reactions to Change: Challenges and Concerns

This case provides validation of theoretical and empirical work concerning the implementation of change (Fullan, 1991; Sarason, 1982, 1990). Critical issues noted in the literature include

- problems in extending innovation beyond an original team;
- the importance of incremental gains being tied to existing practice;
- the need for time and resources to assimilate and understand the rationale and implications of the proposed change;
- the need to overcome entrenched resistance based on past experience with change;
- the need to learn to tolerate ambiguity and resistance;
- the need to listen to all the constituent groups;
- the critical role of the principal.

Good examples of each of these critical issues can be seen in this case.

Extending innovation from an initial small success into a real and lasting change, is one of the classic implementation hazards. The principal and the project leadership team were critically aware that this project was small by design, and that the challenge of expanding its scope to include the rest of the staff was a formidable one. The metaphor of disturbing the nest was used by a secondary school teacher to describe the resistance to change within a secondary school. A secondary teacher described colleagues as follows:

> The people who have been in the job for twenty some years in the secondary school, they feel a little uncomfortable with someone coming in and disturbing them. Your nest is being disturbed. A nice warm, comfortable nest, and someone opens the door and lets cold air in . . ,saying, 'Hey, this has to be cleaned up. It is dirty.

The majority of the teachers at Shoreline Secondary School are quite experienced. This is both an advantage and a disadvantage:

> The idea of change is very dramatic. We've had many changes in our careers. A lot of people in an aging workforce which we have here, are fairly content with their methodologies now. They don't want to make changes in the last five years of their career . . Not to say that we are all reactionary or conservative, but there is a tendency if something is working for you as well as you think it is, to leave it that way.

Some teachers argue that for the past twenty years, the secondary schools have been the victims of the political whims of the party in power:

> [The government should] give us time to get a real feel for a document before they feel compelled to change it . . . Every time you have a new change in the political party in power, it seems they feel the need to leave their mark on education.

The principal and the project leadership team members recognized the presence of a change-resisting element in their colleagues. The team adopted as its strategy an attitude of acceptance:

> Don't fight those people. You just move the people along who can be moved — encourage, give money and help and anything. And the rest of them, when it comes time to selecting the people who will be implementing the program, they won't be in.

The principal and the project leadership team recognized where the challenges exist. As a team member explained:

> The challenges in the project is not the kids. It is the staff, and it is the parents, and the community. Everybody has been to school. There wasn't anything wrong with it then. 'If it ain't broke don't fix it' sort of idea . . . If it is going to work you need to work with the believers . . . give them all the support they need . . . work with them and they will bring people on board.

The team accepts the fact that change is not easy or fast. As one teacher said,

> Change comes in small measures. You can't expect people to change overnight into something like this. This is a drastic change. I think probably you should be looking at an implementation time of five to ten years before you see it working.

Different reactions to the content of change sometimes reflect different feelings about the process of change, and are based in previous experiences with change, both positive and negative. A secondary school teacher described the experience of the Transition Years Pilot Project in the following terms:

> I'm still standing at the edge looking at the black hole which we do with so many of our experiments, our attempts at change. It doesn't frighten me because I know that whatever happens we will try to do the best that we can for most of the students.

When change is perceived as imposed from above or outside, it is often resisted for that very reason. The researchers were told many times that the Transition Years initiatives emerged out of a southern Ontario/Toronto-based political agenda designed to address the problems and educational needs of teachers and pupils in the large urban sprawl in the greater Metropolitan area. Many of the issues identified within the Ministry of Education's Transition Years discussion paper, and in quantitative data collection associated with it, were seen to have no direct relevance to the learning environment they experience daily. Data were being collected during the week that the Minister of Education announced the compulsory destreaming of Grade 9 and the possible destreaming of Grade 10, for September, 1993, an occurrence that appeared to significantly heighten the anxiety level of the teachers. In summary, one teacher commented:

> The Ministry has to facilitate change, not mandate it.

Change Substance

Exploring Core Curriculum: Cross-Panel Linkages

All of the teachers involved, at both elementary and secondary levels, stated that they believed that the Transition Years Pilot Project experience had been a meaningful professional development activity that significantly enhanced their respect for and understanding of the nature of the experience of their cross-panel colleagues.

A typical comment:

> If you want to talk about my growth as a teacher, it has been wonderful.

New strategies were acquired. A secondary teacher commented:

> I was one of those teachers with a strong teacher-centred class. But now I have been converted into wanting a mixture of teacher-centred and student-centred. I have grown to appreciate and understand the importance of group activities and all the various and intrinsic benefits gained by the students from the group activities.

New respect for colleagues was gained:

> I think for me it was an appreciation of the skills of an elementary school teacher and some of those skills were transferable . . . to my class . . . It is a great feeling to know that you are enhancing the learning of the students by using strategies you picked up from here and there from other people.

Teachers increased their knowledge of the culture of each panel:

> Going to the elementary school and seeing how much organization there was in a classroom that some people might think was very unstructured . . . It was [the students'] room, their teacher, and they just had some great ownership in what they were doing. They were helping each other. . . they knew the process . . . Sometimes we think in high school, students come in, they wait for you to get it all together, and they wait for the package to be presented to them, and they are one little player in an orchestra. If they want to play their tune today they can, if they don't they just stay out of it. The conductor still goes on with/without them.

Elementary teachers learned about the challenges of the secondary working environment:

> I have the students all day long so that if I need to steal some time to work on something else I could do that. . . . Where the classes shift all the time you can't steal minutes. You have to follow the clock and sometimes people get lost. You don't always get to know everybody.

And about the challenges of structures:

> Secondary school teaching doesn't allow you the freedom that an elementary school had . . . Teaching only one, possibly two subjects, it is very difficult to integrate if you are only responsible for one subject area. . . I would see that as very boring, having to teach the same class three times in a row.

In short, these teachers learned that they were dealing with the same students, the same issues, and the same communities. They were using different strategies to attempt to reach the same goal: the development of appropriate education which will meet the needs of their students.

As accurately described by the students in their interviews, students at this age learn most and best from teachers who can be characterized as enthusiastic and engaged in the teaching process, professionals who are working innovatively and energetically to engage the students in the learning process, and to help them understand the material, rather than memorize it (Gardner, 1991; Hargreaves & Earl, 1990). Some of the approaches mentioned most often were the use of humour and experiential activities. Lectures and board-copying were seen by all students as "boring", and as leading to disengagement from the learning process. It might be argued, and indeed was cited by the students, that pedantry is an abuse of a teacher's power: when a student disengages from her learning to the extent that she can no longer attend school, she is disenfranchised from an education.

Student Services

Three aspects of Student Services will be discussed: assisting students in their transition to high school, the particular needs of culturally diverse students in their transition, and improving student services in the elementary schools.

(i) Assisting students in their transition to high school. As outlined above, the students interviewed did not view the transition to high school as a traumatic experience. The secondary teachers concurred with this:

> The thing I don't see the kids telling me is that they are unhappy to be coming to a situation where they have more than one teacher in a day. They are not unhappy with the situation of being in a larger building, because they realize that there is more richness . They are looking forward to the fact that they are going to be meeting new friends . . . They are looking for something different. This is opposed to what Andy [Hargreaves'] research came out. My observations don't validate that research.

Another teacher reiterated:

> The kids in September, the Grade 9's, feel a little lost the first couple of weeks. If you poll them by the end if the first month, and you asked them if they preferred to be back in . . . the classroom that they came from, they all unanimously shriek 'NO!'.

Part of the credit for this feeling of transition as a non-issue derives from the support services that are in place, both as a result of and independently of the Transition Years Pilot Projects. Shoreline Secondary School offers a range of counselling services to meet a range of individual needs. This covers a spectrum from career counselling, through remedial academic tutoring, through the Native student office and counsellor, and includes a Drop-in Program for the often-absent students. This Drop-in Centre offers individual instruction, supervised Home Study, Distance Education programs, and a safe, flexible, place to spend time for those students who are not sure they want to drop out or don't have anywhere else to go.

Orientation to high school assists the students in their transition. Orientation should be offered to students while they are in Grade 8. According to the data collected here, this is best conducted by Grade 9 students, on site in the high school. The shadowing technique utilized at Shoreline Secondary School was the most appreciated and effective of the strategies used in reducing fears about the high school experience.

(ii) Assisting Native students' transition. Native students (and other culturally-different students) require special services to cope with the additional transitions that they experience on entering the secondary school environment. As described above, the techniques that have proven most effective in facilitating the transition for the Native students are briefly summarized here:

- There is a Native counsellor, a social worker who has an office in the school building, and who is available in the school before, during, and after school hours, as needed. This counsellor has visited all the students' home communities, maintains ties with their boarding homes, and is available as a liaison to the community and the school.
- The counsellor visits the communities in the spring before students are to enter Shoreline Secondary School, and gives them an orientation there, including course-selection. Later in the spring, the students visit the school for a few days, and spend time with a "buddy", where possible someone from their home community who is already attending Shoreline.
- Once the students get to Shoreline Secondary School, the counsellor helps the students orient themselves to life in the city, including such details as learning how to use public transit, visiting the doctor and dentist, and locating other community services.
- The teachers and students at Shoreline have created an atmosphere that the Native students find warm and welcoming. There is a Friendship Circle held weekly, and several courses offered at Shoreline that are relevant to Native needs and interests.

(iii) Improving student services in the elementary schools. Both teachers and students commented on the need to improve student services in the elementary schools. Two specific recommendations were made: formalization of counselling services, and the improvement of the knowledge shared by elementary teachers with their students about the nature of the secondary school experience.

In direct contradiction to the observations of both teachers and students at the secondary level (as reported above), it was the perception of the elementary teachers that students experience a traumatic transition to secondary school. One teacher described the students' feelings toward their elementary school in the following way:

> Kids telling you that they don't want to leave the school because it is like their nest. In elementary school everybody knows everybody else. All the teachers know everybody else. It is a very very close environment and they are afraid to go into a secondary school which seems huge, cold and impersonal to somebody on the outside. Even as an elementary teacher walking into a secondary school I find it intimidating sometimes. So for these kids it is really hard on them.

There is some evidence that elementary teachers communicate these misperceptions to their students. As the Grade 9 students commented, Grade 8 students need information about high school that is both current and positive.

The provision of formalized Student Services in the elementary school was identified as a needed change. In the words of one elementary teacher:

> I find the need to have . . . a student services element in the elementary school . . . I am the kid's teacher, the person they spend almost all day with . . . there are lots of other little kids who have things to deal with that I am not trained to do, and I am not going to mess with it.

The lack of formalized Student Services and full-time trained counselling staff at the elementary level is a readily identifiable gap in the spectrum of services required to meet the needs of early adolescent learners.

Destreaming

While teachers agreed that the question of meeting the needs of adolescents must be seriously addressed, and that students in General level programs are not being well-served by existing practice, and that something must be done for students in General level courses to reduce alienation and dropout problems, they did not see destreaming as a good answer. They, like the students, expressed strong concerns that the students in Basic and Advanced/Enriched courses would suffer academically when/if these initiatives are implemented.

Students were unanimous in their antagonism to the proposed destreaming changes. If the destreaming policy is to be implemented successfully, students must feel that their voices have been heard and that their needs are being met. In that students have more at stake in their education than anyone else, including teachers, administrators, and Ministry officials, they should be included in the process of planning approaches to destreaming. Innovative teachers might encourage their students to participate on a class-by-class basis in helping them to respond to the new demands imposed by this new policy.

Conclusions

For all the participants in this project, regardless of their personal understandings of the purpose and the origins of the Transition Years initiative, their experience was described as positive. Yet, for many teachers, this positive experience was contradicted by the perception of forced implementation, not planned change. As one teacher explained, the ultimate responsibility for implementing the initiatives rests solely with the classroom teacher:

> What I am sad about is that [the Transition Years initiative] has such wonderful potential...It is a shame that it is being pushed too soon...It is really unfair, although it is quite understandable, that the Ministry would say to boards of education and superintendents, that now this [implementation] is your responsibility, which in actual fact it isn't. The ultimate person who is responsible is me. That's whose responsibility it is. And I don't get much help.

This assessment harkens back to the metaphors of the closed doors described earlier in this case. In spite of the cross-panel sharing and the team-building which occurred because of the pilot project, teaching in Shoreline Secondary School remains an individual enterprise. Program development and delivery are ultimately an individual teacher's responsibility. In exploring other means of developing and delivering curriculum, the elementary and secondary teachers came to realize the challenges in implementing any innovation: resources, time, and expertise. Yet they also came to realize that the strength inherent in any successful innovation is the participants. As one teacher explained,

> The whole pilot scenario of Transition projects really doesn't depend as much on money as it does on the people involved that are willing to do things.

Strength is derived from empowerment. Teachers and students need to be empowered, and to feel that their contributions are significant, their opinions meaningful, and their actions worthwhile.

Summary Of Learnings

Change Process:

The Many Meanings Of Transition

- The rationale behind the Transition Years initiatives is not clearly understood. It is difficult to communicate the real complexity and depth of fundamental change which lies at the heart of the restructuring initiatives. However, if steps are not taken to address this pervasive lack of understanding, implementation will be impeded and further resisted.
- The Transition Years initiatives have many meanings; for some teachers in this study, they were synonymous with destreaming Grade 9.
- The Transition Years initiatives are not seen as a Grade 7/8/9 issue, but as a secondary school issue.
- The Transition Years initiatives are seen by some as a political agenda, addressing the needs of Metropolitan Toronto, and not the rest of the province.

Recognition Of The Need For Change In Practice

- Many teachers in the project see the need to change their practice and that of their colleagues to address the needs of their students more effectively in ways which reflect the changing societal realities.
- This recognition of the need for change in practice was more pronounced in the secondary than in the elementary panel.

The Critical Role Of Leadership

- The principal's role is critical to the successful implementation of change.
- The principal plays a key role in establishing the climate of collaborative work relationships among teachers, which is required for the empowerment of teachers in initiating and responding to change.

- Essential components of change-facilitative leadership include both vision-generating and decision-making that are shared with teachers on a number of levels.

Reactions To Change: Challenges And Concern

- Change, to be effective and long-lasting, must be tied into existing practice and seen as relevant to and useful in the daily professional experience of the participants.

- Some teachers are fearful of the Restructuring Initiatives because they believe they have neither the skills nor the resources necessary.

- Extending innovation from an initial small success into real and lasting change, is one of the classic implementation hazards. The challenge of expanding the scope of innovation beyond a pilot project team to other participants is a formidable one.

- Professional experience of teachers can be both an asset and a liability in implementing Restructuring Initiatives.

Change Substance

Exploring Core Curriculum: Cross-Panel Linkages

- Cross-panel understanding, respect, and collegiality grew as a result of the elementary and secondary school teachers working together. This facilitated students' smooth transition from one school culture to the next.

- Cross-panel interactions stimulated both individual and collective reflection on the nature of the learning process and the adolescent transition.

- Within the secondary panel, both elementary and secondary teachers saw isolation and departmentalization as impediments to collegiality. As well as the need to encourage collegiality among teachers across panels, there is a need to develop a culture of collegiality both within and across departments, grades, and levels of instruction.

Student Services

- Orientation to high school assists students in their transition. Orientation should be offered to students while they are in Grade 8. Preferably, this would be conducted mainly by Grade 9 students, on-site in the high school.

- The lack of formalized Student Services and full-time trained counselling staff at the elementary level is a readily identifiable gap in the spectrum of services required to meet the needs of early adolescent learners.

- Grade 8 students need information about high school that is both current and positive.

- For secondary schools to meet the needs of their culturally diverse student communities effectively, a range of services should be in place, including culturally-sensitive counsellors; classroom teachers who have the knowledge, skills, and attitudes required to adapt program to the needs of their students; and a school-wide commitment to develop cross-cultural awareness and respect.

Destreaming

- Teachers and students expressed strong concerns that students in Basic and Advanced/ Enriched courses would suffer academically when/if the Destreaming initiative is implemented

- In order to understand this initiative, and thus not resist it, students, like teachers, should be included in the process of planning approaches to destreaming.

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6.

BRIARWOOD FAMILY OF SCHOOLS: A STORY OF TRANSITION

BY

Ardra Cole with Ilda Januario

> Moving into Grade 9 is like getting a Christmas present. The box looks very familiar and you think you know what's in it but when you rip open the package it's a totally different thing. (Grade 9 student)

This is a story of transition. It is an attempt to re-present and thereby understand the phenomenon of transition as experienced by students, teachers, and administrators associated with a secondary school in southwestern Ontario, and one school board's efforts towards facilitating change related to the transition phenomenon. Because stories as lived are complex--interconnected networks of perceptions, experiences, and events of people in contexts--this account is an attempt to understand transition and change as they occur within a context of multiple realities. To do so, we "rip open the package" to examine its contents. First, we explain the process of gaining access to and examining the contents, and then take a look at the wrapping.

Information Gathering and Interpretation

In an attempt to understand and represent the contextual complexity of the transition experience and the multiple perspectives contributing to that complexity, information on which this account is based was gathered *in situ* through observation, individual interviews and focus group discussions, and collection of relevant documents. Information gathering, interpretation, and representation were based on the assumption that individuals construct their realities within a personal and social context. Consequently, understanding of a phenomenon involving individuals, events, and contexts is made possible through an examination and consideration of those events and how they are experienced by those involved. Thus, students, teachers, school administrators, professional staff involved with student services, and central office personnel--those with a stake in the transition years initiative--were key sources of information in this study. Through their perspectives, the story of transition in the Briarwood Family of Schools unfolds.

Overview of Procedure

Following a preliminary meeting with the vice-principal of Briarwood (who also is the coordinator of the Transition Years Project), the school board's Adolescent

Years consultant (who is a member of the Transition Years steering committee), and the central Transition Years team, arrangements were made for intensive information gathering to take place in the school over a two week period. This involved informal observation in classrooms and in the school; attendance at meetings focused on the Transition Years Pilot Project which were scheduled during that period; in-depth interviews and/or focus group discussions with school administrators, the Adolescent Years consultant, and a sampling of teachers and students from the Briarwood family of schools; and access to documentation and records relevant to the pilot project. A summary of observation and interview data sources is located in the following tables.

Table I

Summary of Data Sources--Staff

Individual Interviews	Adolescent Years Consultant Principal Vice-principal Director Student Services/Gr. 9 Teacher Guidance Counsellor Gr. 9 French Teacher/Dept. Head Gr. 9 English Teacher/Dept. Head Gr. 9 Teacher (Geo., Hist., Maths, Eng.) Gr. 9 Math Teacher Gr. 7/8 Teacher (Feeder School)
Focus Group Discussions (1)	Seven Participants: Four Elementary Teachers (Gr. 7/8) Three Secondary Teachers: Gr. 9 English/Assist. Dept. Head History Dept. Head Business, Co-op Coordinator
Observations	Gr. 9 French Teacher/Dept. Head Gr. 9 Teacher (Geo., Hist., Maths, Eng.) Two Gr. 9 Math Teachers Gr. 9 Teacher (Hist., Religion) Gr. 7/8 Teacher (Feeder School) Family of Schools Transition Years Committee Meeting Meeting on Transition Years Project (Maths Dept., Principal, Vice-Principal, Adolescent Years Consultant)

Table II

Summary of Data Sources–Students

Individual Interviews	Gr. 9 (Advanced), Female Gr. 9 (General) Male Gr. 9 (Basic) Male Gr. 8 Female Gr. 7 Male
Focus Group Discussions (3) (All Feeder Schools Represented)	Group 1–Five Participants 1 Gr. 9 Female 2 Gr. 7 Males 2 Gr. 7 Females Group 2–Five Participants: 1 Gr. 9 Male 2 Gr. 8 Males 2 Gr. 8 Females Group 3–Five Participants Peer Helpers (3 Sr., 2 Jr. Secondary Students)
Observations	Gr. 9 (Advanced), Female Gr. 9 (General) Male Gr. 9 (Basic) Male Gr. 8 Female Gr. 7 Male

Process and Criteria for Identification of Teachers and Students

Teachers and students involved in the study were identified in consultation with the principal and vice-principal and in cooperation with the principals of all six feeder schools, and through spontaneous sampling. Participation was voluntary. In an attempt to gain access to a variety of perspectives we aimed for diversity in our requests for participation. Grade level and subject area, age, teaching experience overall and at Briarwood, and level of involvement in the Transition Years Project (teachers who have had central, direct, or minimal direct involvement) were the key criteria used in the selection of teachers.

The key factors considered in the selection of students were: grade level; estimated ability level or class grouping; achievement-orientation (representation of "at risk" students as well as those experiencing little, if any, difficulty); gender; and ethnicity.

Broad Areas Covered in Interviews and Focus Groups

The following topics or areas formed the basis for conversation in both the individual interviews and focus group discussions. Because the conversations were informal and open-ended, this schedule was used as a guideline only.

Schedule for Conversations with Teachers.

1. **Background Information** related to identification criteria (e.g., nature and extent of teaching experience, length of time at Briarwood, experience elsewhere, grades taught currently and in the past, etc.).

2. **Experience of Transition** currently and in the past including their own experiences of transition as students and/or teachers, perceptions of students' experiences of transition, perceived areas of particular difficulty for students, assessment of differences between transition and non-transition students, past and current practices aimed at facilitating students' transition.

3. **The Transition Years Pilot Project** – nature and extent of knowledge about and involvement in project; description of Transition Years Project and its activities, perceptions about impact/influence of project on action/practice in school, classroom, and beyond; relationship between transition years focus at classroom, school, system, and community levels; future of transition years initiatives.

4. **The processes of implementation and change as they relate to the Transition Years Project** – perceptions of school organization, student support services, working relationships within school and department; general description of and involvement in implementation process including inservice support at school and system levels; identification of factors facilitating and constraining growth of Transition Years' initiatives particularly with respect to leadership, work culture, and student-teacher relationships.

Schedule for Conversations with Students.

1. **Background Information** related to identification criteria (e.g., age, grade level, years in school, community, etc.).

2. Experience of Transition currently and in the past including other experiences of transition to new grades, schools, communities, and countries; main differences and particular areas of concern and difficulty; coping strategies and own ways of easing the transition to a new situation; ways in which others (peers, teachers, parents, principal, etc.) have helped to ease the transition.

3. The Transition Years Pilot Project – nature and extent of knowledge about and involvement in project; description of Transition Years Project and its activities; perceptions about impact/influence of project on action/practice in school, classroom, and beyond;

4. The processes of implementation and change as they relate to the Transition Years Project – perceptions of school organization, student support services, working relationships within school and department; relationships between teachers and students and among students; knowledge of implementation process including inservice support at school and system levels; identification of factors facilitating and constraining growth of Transition Years initiatives particularly with respect to leadership, work culture, and student-teacher relationships.

Conversations ranged in length from 20 minutes to two hours depending on schedules and opportunities and all were audiotaped and transcribed for analysis. Field notes made during classroom observations and meetings were subsequently "thickened" with reflections, preliminary analyses, and questions for further inquiry.

Interpretation and Representation

Information from all sources was interpreted within a conceptual framework based on a broadly interpretive perspective, that is, examining and giving consideration to perceptions and events as experienced within the constructs of individual and social contexts. The principle of emergent themes guided both the interpretation and representation of information.

The account is presented first by laying out the multiple contexts in which the story of transition is set followed by a description of the overall project goals and plans. Next is a presentation of perspectives within a framework of emerging themes. The overall analysis which looks at process and outcomes related to change is based on the basic assumption that congruency between intentions of change and actions or perceptions of change, and between assumptions, values, and beliefs underlying intentions and actions are significant factors in determining the "success" of an initiative. In the presentation, therefore, stated intentions related to the Transition Years foci and the perceptions and actions of administrators, teachers, and students involved in the study are considered. Several key issues and concepts are further considered in a final summary and analysis.

Contexts of Transition

The Secondary School

Briarwood Secondary School, with a reputation of being a "have not" school, sits atop a hill overlooking the urban, predominantly working class community from which it draws most of its 930 or so students. Adjacent is an elementary "feeder" school, one of six elementary schools comprising the Briarwood "family." In 1966 when Briarwood was built, it too, was an elementary school; in 1984 it became a secondary school. To accommodate this change as well a rapid population growth in the community, seventeen portable classrooms were added to the existing structure. In spite of its somewhat fragmented physical appearance Briarwood is, as its motto suggests, a community celebrating people. A strong sense of warmth in a family-like atmosphere is readily apparent. It is a place where caring and concern for students are now the order of the day while, just four years ago, they were explicit goals set by the new administrative team.

The Administration and Staff

Initially perceived by the teaching staff as "board people sent in to clean things up," the principal and vice-principal set out to facilitate fundamental change in the way the school operated both practically and conceptually. The many changes they initiated were connected to the primary purpose of creating a school and educational community where students felt welcomed and accepted. They began "to dress up the place for the students" by making physical changes to the physical appearance of the building. The main office was altered to create a "more open atmosphere"; new locker doors were installed; and new custodial staff were hired who "really cared about the appearance of the school" and ensured that the building was always as clean as possible. Once this was done, new school uniforms were ordered to help students identify with the school and to help them develop a sense of community.

Consistent with the school board philosophy based on "the principle of the first call"--placing concern for and commitment to students and their development at the front and centre of all considerations and decisions related to schooling and curriculum--the administrative team introduced ideas and approaches which reflected beliefs and practices that, in some cases, were dramatically different from those existing in the school at that time (e.g., involving students in decision making and leadership roles, emphasis on full integration of special needs students, curriculum development with emphases on relevance and integration, and collaborative work among teachers). Also, to carry through on the theme of "school as inclusive community," they encouraged the participation of all staff members (secretaries, custodians, and paraprofessionals) in school affairs and staff meetings.

Of the 67 teachers currently at Briarwood, only four are long-time staff members. Over the last four years there has been a two-thirds turnover in teaching staff. From one teacher's perspective, a push to hire people willing to work in community and willing to learn from each other, people with strong interpersonal skills and with ideas and philosophies consistent with the administration's has resulted in a strong core of "progressive thinkers." This perception of the current collective staff attitude exists throughout the school among both administrators and teachers. Those resistant to change and more traditional in their thinking and practice are reported to be a minority.

The Students

Approximately 930 students, ranging in age from 14 to 20 years, attend Briarwood Secondary. (The projected enrolment for next year represents a slight increase to 977). Two hundred twenty-five students are in Grade 9. The student population is ethnically diverse with as many as 43 different ethnic groups represented; many of these students being first generation Canadians.

Forty per cent of the student population is Portuguese. Language barriers and differences between Portuguese and Canadian cultures have a direct impact on parent involvement in the school and on student psychosocial adjustment. Girls in particular often experience stress as they stand between two cultures and two sets of norms and standards of acceptable behaviour.

Societal conditions and pressures are reflected among the students. Because of its location in a community largely dependent on the automotive industry, students at Briarwood mainly come from working class families. The economic recession and recent political changes affecting the automotive industry have caused a high incidence of job loss in these families; consequently, as many as 40% of the students contribute to family support through part-time jobs. An estimated 5% of students are sole income earners and work up to 60 hours per week. The drop-out rate is high; school violence and crime are on the rise; and concern over racism is growing. One student reported, "I heard we're the third worst school in Ontario for fights. That's pretty bad." In spite of all this, the students are outgoing and welcoming and their pride in the school is evident.

It was sensitivity to and concern for the student population, a strong belief in social justice and equal opportunity, and serious doubts about how well the current system of education was serving the students that prompted the administrative team to respond with a proposal to the Ministry of Education's discussion paper on the Transition Years. As the principal noted, "The Transition Years focus fit nicely with our goals for a kid-centred school. We were able to take our theme of celebrating people and roll it easily into the Transition Years [emphasis]." (The fact that the Transition Years Project was embedded in an already existing and well-established long term focus and plan is a key point that will be further considered in a later section.)

The School Board

For the past few years, the school board in which Briarwood is located has been in the midst of fundamental change. Guided by a vision of equal and just education and opportunities for all students, the school board has been involved in a reconceptualization of the structure and curriculum of its school system. Giving students the "first call" and building "inclusive communities" are at the heart of all change initiatives underway in the board. Preparing the context for change, rather than implementing change, has been the emphasis of curricular and staff development work since the ideas were envisioned several years ago.

Structurally, a "family of schools" system was adopted to allow and encourage stronger links between elementary and secondary school panels. The Briarwood family is one of five other families in the system. The long term goals with respect to curriculum are to move from a traditional "transmission" model of instruction to one with a "transformation" orientation – from a teacher-centred, subject-driven curriculum to a student-centred, project-driven curriculum. This, then, is the system context within which the Transition Years Pilot Project was conceptualized and planned.

Project Plans and Areas of Focus

Approach to Project Initiation, Change and Development

In brief, the approach to development and implementation of the Transition Years Pilot Project was consistent with the model of "servant leadership" operational in the school board--the idea that everyone in the school community has an important contribution to make to its operation--with teachers and students at the centre of reform efforts. Throughout, emphasis was placed on preparing the context for new ways of thinking rather than on implementing new ideas. Initial goals were to "patiently build a rich, facilitative infrastructure" with the idea that change would then occur naturally and painlessly. Efforts to facilitate change were concentrated in two areas: attention to process (paradigmatic shift, implementation, and leadership); and attention to substance (five focus areas). Restructuring NOT destreaming was seen as the key to successful change. In this case, restructuring is broadly defined to include: student grouping; attitudes and perspectives of teachers; workday; physical and cultural context; curriculum; and expectations and workload demands of students and teachers.

Transition Years Foci and Plans

Goals and plans for their attainment in the following areas of focus were identified in the project proposal and by those directly involved in the design of the project. Activities carried out in each of the five areas are described in a later section. In brief, the focus areas were:

1. School Organization (especially for Grade 8 students and particularly those who are often alienated or isolated from school)--development of inter-disciplinary project-driven curriculum programs in order to engage students in more relevant, imaginative, and challenging curriculum through an expanded repertoire of teaching practices, modes of delivery, and student groupings.

2. Facilitating Transitions (especially for students in Grades 7 to 9)--development and implementation of programs and procedures to reduce students' "transition anxiety" and ultimately increase levels of achievement and satisfaction with school culture and curriculum.

3. Guidance and Special Education (especially for "at risk" students).– implementation and improvement of programs and procedures to meet adolescent needs, particularly with respect to identity, affiliation, and other profound experiences of change in order to increase student retention and general satisfaction with the secondary school experience.

4. Community Involvement (especially for parents/guardians)–promotion of trust, communication, and collaboration through the development and use of a two-way communication process in order to strengthen parent-school and school-community links for the overall enhancement of student learning opportunities and experiences.

5. Innovative Inservice--development of a family of schools plan for staff development focused on cross-panel contact through jointly planned and delivered curriculum projects and cooperative teaching and learning strategies in order to help staff promote student retention and interest in school.

Emergent Themes and Perspectives on Transition

This section is a presentation of the perspectives and responses, organized within a framework of emerging themes, of those involved in the study . A summary of students', teachers', and administrators' perspectives is presented under each of the following headings: Why Change; What to Change; How Change is Facilitated; Change Facilitated by Attention to Process; Change Facilitated by Attention to Substance; Emergent Issues; and Learnings of Change and Transition. To honour the perspectives of the participants we quote generously from data gathered through conversation. Data presented in this way maintains a high level of integrity and affords readers some opportunity to engage in the interpretation of that which is presented, that is, to acknowledge their own perspectives and realities.

Why Change? Is There a Need to Change?

In order to understand this case of change and transition, it is perhaps useful first to explore the motivations for change in general and for the Transition Years Pilot Project in particular, and the varying perspectives on the need to do things differently. There is as much congruency of viewpoints on both topics among administrators as there is variation of opinion among teachers and among students.

The perspectives on change can be considered according to four categories of need or demand: developmental needs; psychosocial needs; academic needs; and societal needs. In some cases, teachers, students, and administrators identify specific needs for change; in others the need for change and attention to the Transition Years are discussed within the complexity of individual, institutional, and societal need.

From an Administrative Perspective

> [Our Board operates on] the Principle of the First Call which is a philosophy based on trying to prize every student. Every student is somehow a gift to the community. We don't always work it out in practice but that's the intention and I think that we've recognized it institutionally. I think we're looking at what we do much more systemically now [asking ourselves], "What are we doing as institutions by our codes of behaviour, by our expectations, by how we group students, by how we sort them or respond to them or fail to respond to them or the values that we seem to prize that pushes out groups of students?" We have begun to identify with this Principle of the First Call.
>
> [In the past] there were many things done in the name of efficiency for our institutions, in the name of convenience for ourselves, in the name of image in the community, in the name of control over the environment. We're trying to really think seriously about how we can create a best quality environment for all these kids, all of them, and do it in such a way that it doesn't unwittingly lower self esteem for whole batches of them, or destroy their kind of natural sense of affiliation, or break significant contact with adults. Institutionally we have failed to do certain things that could have helped students and could have motivated them. The traditional structure of Grade 9 did not really support the needs of students at that level, so we're trying to attend to them. (Adolescent Years Consultant)

In the broadest sense, the whole focus on the Transition Years was interpreted by the administrators (and some teachers) as an "equity issue." As the vice-principal observed, there was a need for attention to Grade 9 students, especially General Level and Basic Level students and students with low self-esteem who had difficulty adjusting to secondary school. "We sensed that there was something wrong with the streaming system we had. The system was designed for advanced or bright kids who don't need the same kind of attention others do. General and Basic kids because of their place in society are victimized all the way." (Vice-Principal)

The need to respond to developmental and psychosocial needs of students was identified by the principal. "Not only are the students moving from Grade 8 to Grade 9 but from puberty to young adulthood. This is a period marked by a struggle to establish their own set of values and beliefs and to deal with moral and ethical issues and [it is] the beginning of a move away from dependence on home and parents." (Principal) The principal also commented on the students' expressed need for affiliation with and within the secondary school, a need identified by teachers and students as well.

From the Perspective of Teachers

The need for easing students' transition to the secondary school was identified by some teachers who commented on the fears and concerns often expressed by students. The concept of the welcoming school is evident in remarks that suggest a need to: familiarize students with high school so that they feel as much a part of the school as others already there; help students enter with a sense of self-confidence that they will be accepted; dispel myths about high school; and, help students feel unintimidated by the size of the school and by students much larger than themselves.

A Grade 7/8 teacher involved in Transition Years activities linked the focus of the Transition Years with the need to reduce complexity in adolescent students' lives.

> Sometimes we forget that the students are going through a lot of changes. Going through the environmental shift from elementary to secondary school is one more thing they have to deal with. I think we should be looking at trying to make the Grade 9 classroom look more like the Grade 8 classroom than the Grade 10, or 11 classroom. For a lot of different reasons the more familiar the classroom or school environment, the easier it is for that transition to happen smoothly. (Grade 7/8 teacher)

As another observed, "It is unrealistic to expect students to do the integration of subject matter and find relevance in it all when they've never had to before and when they're energy is expended on their own development through puberty." (Head of Student Services and Teacher)

The awareness of the need to be responsive to changing times and a changing societal context was prevalent among the teachers; however, perspectives varied on the role of the teacher and school in making such a response. These differing conceptions seem to be at the heart of differences in opinion about the need to focus on the Transition Years. Excerpts from conversations with two teachers both illustrate the opposing perspectives and reflect the struggle some teachers are experiencing. The first teacher began:

> I absolutely despise what we've done to these [General Level] kids. When I taught Grade 8 I had all my kids in the same room--kids with special needs, high academic learners, and the average learners altogether. I enjoyed that. When I got to high school where the kids were separated I saw what it did to their self-esteem. The difference between a General Level class and an Advanced Level class, in terms of self esteem is just unreal. [The General Level students] don't feel any confidence in themselves, and when they're put into a situation where they're all together, they're with a whole bunch of people who don't like themselves, so you've got chaos and a lot of anger, incredible anger and frustration. With some, the anger comes out through violence and these are the kids who are in the office all the time. They're the ones involved in crime and drugs and everything else.... And this is the behaviour they're with all day long. So you've got the anger manifesting itself externally or internally--my kids are either very, very aggressive or very withdrawn--and they don't like themselves. They're quiet, they're suicidal, depressed, the whole bit. I really believe that we need to get rid of the streaming system, at least for part of the day. Actually, I'd like to see a whole restructuring of high school, period.
>
> I see the students' low self-esteem and I see that it's wrong. It's not what we should be doing with these kids.... Some of them are so blunt they'll come right out and say, "We're with all the stupid people. They've put all the stupid people together." They see it as a difference in intellect. All through elementary school they're gaining and they're feeling better and they're doing okay and all of a sudden, smack, the friends they hung around with in Grade 8 are now in other courses and they're with people who are more suited to their academic abilities. Now they're in a whole room with people who can't work well or who don't have good work habits and so anything that they might have picked up before, they lose. They see it as something that's wrong too and that they've been put down and put down. In high school their friends who are in advanced levels make jokes and make fun of them. They make fun of themselves too because they're used to it, so it just perpetuates low self-esteem.

> My goal is to get these kids to feel good about themselves or at least on the path to well-being, to feel whole and to feel okay, because they really don't. A lot of them are just lost. They have no direction; they don't have any goal in life; they don't know what they want; they don't know what their options are; they don't feel like they have any choices or that they can make any decisions on their own. (Head of Student Services and Teacher)

Reflecting a different perspective is the second teacher who taught Grade 9 and who maintains that Grade 9 students: place low priority on academics and little value on learning; are not product-oriented; and don't see relevance of school to life. According to this teacher, societal change has led to a skills focus and technological orientation which has created an inappropriate form of dependence. He cautions against fostering further dependence by attempting to ease students' transitions. He said:

> Students don't need to think anymore. They can rely on technology. They have a shorter attention span--can't sit and listen anymore--that calls for a need to change. What we've done for years doesn't work anymore especially with Grade 9 and 10 students. The structure and traditional models of teaching have to change; [however], my traditional background causes me to wonder a lot whether we are, in fact, trying to do too much for the students, whether there is really a problem with transition for those students. There is a worry that there are so many that have trouble adapting or adjusting through those years. Well, students handled that development for a lot of years and really didn't get hurt. [I know that] that was a different age, it was different people with a different social structure, and that has changed. So we do have to change. And there's no question that students are having more trouble coping with those years, but that's only partly the responsibility of the education system. In society they're having so many things bombarding them that it's very difficult for them to cope. Yes, we have to provide ways of helping them cope but my worry is that we provide too much for them. I fear greatly that we are teaching an awful lot of people to stop thinking, at least scientifically or mathematically. How much do we provide for them? How much do we start saying, "No, you've got to start doing some thinking for yourself." (Grade 9 Teacher)

It is apparent that the perspective of the first teacher is congruent with perspectives reflected in the administrators' comments. The second teacher exemplifies some of the difficulties experienced by those who have views on teaching, education, and schooling which are incongruous with those of administration and those which underlie the Transition Years initiatives.

From the Perspective of Students

Grade 8 students anticipating entrance to the secondary school expressed a variety of fears, anxieties, and uncertainties mainly reflecting psychosocial concerns. The importance of these issues for the students was recognized by teachers and administrators and formed the basis for many of the activities focused on facilitating the transition to the secondary school. In a focus group discussion the following concerns were identified: workload; stories about initiation rites (e.g. having heads flushed in toilets, being stuffed in lockers, having to roll marbles down the hall with your nose); being treated like a Grade 1 kid; being made fun of; name calling; being bullied; getting lost; drugs. The students' main concerns were about leaving old friends and making new ones, and fitting in and getting along with other students. How or whether all of these initial thoughts and expectations about high school translate into a need for change is uncertain. Although some clearly are afraid of the unknown and wish for more familiarity, others like the student quoted below look forward to high school *because* it is different from elementary school. "You get a locker. You get treated like an adult. There are no younger kids around. And you change classes and have different teachers for different subjects." (Grade 8 Student) Decision making about selection of high school seems to be based more on these criteria than on academic programs. That is not to say, however, that academic concerns are not an issue.

Among Grade 8 students, there is an expectation that the work in high school is much more difficult and demanding. This may be explained, in part, by reports that in elementary school, high school is often held up as a threat. At first glance, it could appear that these expectations turn out to be unrealized for students once they get to high school since most of those interviewed commented on the inaccuracy of their initial expectations finding that, "in reality the workload is less, although you need to keep on top of things at all times." (Grade 9 Student) A closer look, however, reveals that they in fact may have just learned to adapt to the new demands (sometimes at considerable cost):

> The first semester was a little tough for me but after the first semester I realized what the school wants and expects and I know what to go after and what goals to go for. . . . If you do your work everyday and put

> enough time into it you get a good mark. . . . I'm kind of struggling though because I haven't yet adapted to the school's expectations. I know them. It's just that it's kind of hard, especially to do homework, because you're busy some nights and some nights you have to work. . . . Like anything else Grade 9 is never what you expect. It's like a Christmas present, the box looks very familiar and you know what's in it, and then when you rip open the package it's a totally different thing. . . . Like some subjects you take without realizing how boring they are. They look good in the pamphlets but when you're in the actual classroom it's totally different. (Grade 9 Student)

The current system of streaming takes its toll on students forcing them to make sacrifices of social or extracurricular involvement in order to keep up with workload demands or, for those with commitments to part-time work (often necessary for family support), it may mean opting for a less demanding program. One Grade 9 student who started out taking a few classes with Advanced Level students found the work too demanding and the pace too fast so he decided to switch to a general level program where the pace was more comfortable, the work more reasonable, and there was more time to do other things. For this student, the switch made the workload more manageable but at what cost?

Relevance of certain subject matter and teacher-centred approaches to teaching were called into question by all students. From conversations and classroom observations, it is clear that much of the problem with disengagement can be traced to issues of pedagogy. One Grade 9 student attributed his preference for two particular subjects to the teacher's style of interpersonal interaction with the students, patience, individualized teaching approach, and thoroughness with subject matter coverage. Reports like this, however, were unfortunately not commonplace. The students' most commonly used descriptor of classroom experience was "boring" (presumably variously defined).

What to Change?

It is clear that, for several different reasons, there was a recognized need to do some things differently for students entering high school. Although perspectives varied on what needed to be changed, information from all sources, when broadly considered, points to a recognized need for structural change. Structural change is broadly defined to include: student grouping; attitudes and perspectives of teachers; departmental differences related to attitudes and perspectives of teachers; nature and schedule of workday; expectations and workload demands of both students and teachers; school culture and physical context; and curriculum. In short, changes addressing issues related to the Transition Years involved perspectival and institutional structures. How the facilitation of such changes was conceptualized, carried out, and perceived by those involved is the subject of the next section.

How was Change Facilitated?

Those responsible for initiating the Transition Years Pilot Project recognized the complex and substantive nature of the envisaged change and saw the Transition Years Project as a vehicle for that change. According to the administration, the Transition Years Project was intended as "a vehicle that would have a rich enough capacity to carry [broader] change" (Adolescent Years Consultant); "a vehicle to help us move towards system goals and school goals of greater interdependence." (Principal) The principal explains further:

> The students needed a sense of community which is another way of expressing the school theme of celebrating people. The theme of celebrating people has rolled nicely into the Transition Years. Part of the Transition Years focus is to make the students feel more welcomed into their education, their school. We want to be a kid-centred school. The Transition Years fits nicely into that goal because it focuses us to change and make more relevant the curriculum. (Principal)

The school goals were to promote a student-centred holistic curriculum, create a more open and welcoming atmosphere for students, and to encourage collaborative work among teachers. The overall goal was to help students move from dependence through independence to interdependence while at the same time helping teachers and schools become more interdependent. The Transition Years Project was seen as a way to move towards the achievement of both school and system goals of interdependence. The project activities were nested in this broader context of school and system change. Thus, change was seen as being facilitated by attention to process and by attention to substantive matters.

Change Facilitated by Attention to Process

Facilitating change through attention to matters of process implies a level of sensitivity to the gradual and evolving nature of systemic change. In the Briarwood family of schools, focus was placed on nurturing attitudinal and paradigmatic change, practising a model of "servant" leadership, reshaping the school culture, and on implementation. Administrators' and teachers' perspectives on and responses to the various approaches to facilitating change are recounted below.

Paradigmatic Change from an Administrative Perspective

According to the administration, the focus on facilitating gradual change in attitudes and perspectives through the Transition Years Pilot Project was being reflected among the teachers in their language, level of risk taking, professional development commitment, and in their individual and collective professional self-image.

> The emphasis our Board has placed on curriculum, caring, the student focus, and the Principle of the First Call is now being translated into a fairly broad-based commitment. There's a rich language out there now. . . . Even though secondary schools are still having difficulty, they are still making progress as leaders in the Transition Years. (Adolescent Years Consultant)

The principal, too, observed the teachers' facility and comfort with the use of language related to Transition Years initiatives (e.g. megaskills, outcomes, etc.). He also commented on significant attitudinal changes and an increase in risk-taking and willingness to try new things, noting the time required for the teachers to develop the necessary level of trust in the administration. According to the principal, the pilot project helped to establish a sense of identity within the family of schools, boosted staff morale (including support staff and custodians), and raised the self-esteem of teachers thereby acting as a vehicle for attitudinal change.

The principal and vice-principal identified specific examples of observed change in teachers' commitment to and involvement in professional development which indicated to them an attitudinal and paradigmatic shift: more active involvement and interest in development from within the school; less reliance on outside expertise (e.g., through conferences); change in perception of professional development from "a one-shot effort to hard work that is all part of the ongoing development process;" stronger commitment and greater enthusiasm; perceived need for greater interdependence and working together; dramatic improvements in cross-panel contact both in subtle and more obvious ways (e.g., secondary teachers are realizing benefits of working with elementary teachers and elementary teachers are becoming more comfortable with secondary school teachers).

The following remark by the vice-principal, while illustrating the kind of attitudinal change that has taken place among the teachers, also hints at the approach to leadership that has fostered this kind of change (an issue to be explored subsequently in greater depth). "Four years ago nobody would speak at a staff meeting. We just refused to chair the things and so gradually teachers have taken over. They've set up plans and identified needs. Our role is to help identify and provide what support they need to make significant changes." (Vice-Principal)

Conscious of the need for a system approach to change, the principal recognized the role of central office staff in facilitating change within the family of schools, commenting on the involvement and support of consultants in particular for their expertise, knowledge, and commitment to the Transition Years. "They help us to shift the paradigm and to stand back and look at the big picture."

Paradigmatic Change from the Perspective of Teachers

Teachers reported thoughts on paradigmatic change as observed, as experienced, and as perceived variously reflecting on: the role of the Transition Years Pilot Project in facilitating paradigmatic change; change that has taken place; change that needs to occur for further forward movement; and, some existing barriers to change. Whereas the administrators focused on attitudinal shifts related to professional development, the teachers, not surprisingly, focused on classroom practice. Several teachers commented on the idea that those familiar with the concept of Transition Years and related literature, involved in the project, and comfortable with proposed changes (i.e., changes were consistent with current practices and beliefs) had a positive response to Transition Years initiatives. Even in spite of the pervasive awareness of the problem of drop-out and need for change in ways schools work, teachers not involved and not knowledgeable about the concept or project expressed varying degrees of resistance and often held beliefs inconsistent with those underlying the Transition Years Pilot Project. Worthy of note here is the parenthetical comment, consistently made by teachers and administrators, that those not yet accepting of the kind of changes proposed were a small minority and/or those not directly involved with Grades 9 and 10.

Some teachers commented on the influence on their own practice of attention to the Transition Years and their involvement with elementary school teachers, observing such things as: a new awareness of Grade 9 students' need for support; a need to "see Grade 9s not as a class but as individuals"; and a new and better understanding of teaching methods, "I'm now trying to make the curriculum fit the students rather than the other way around." This teacher's reflection clearly illustrates the kind of thinking or change in thinking required and taking place:

> As a teacher in a General Level class I now can see that the social grouping of these students and the detriment that sometimes is happening as a result makes it worth sacrificing what we do academically. I've gone full circle. The immediate reaction [to the Transition Years] of a lot of teachers was one of doubt but once you've done research on the issue of destreaming and transition and have an understanding of it you come full circle. . . . It's going to take a great deal of work on the part of the teacher. The teacher has to go into a destreamed class knowing the students, knowing their needs and being able to pick and adapt programs to their students. In evaluation there are going to be challenges and that will take time too. There will be a lot of frustrations during the first year but once there is a handle on the program it's going to be much better. I see changes as positive and am going to be very open-minded and positive in my approach to them. (Grade 9 Teacher)

Contrasting this view is one expressed by this mathematics teacher (which is fairly reflective of others in the department):

> I try activity-centred learning once in a while but the nature of the subject doesn't permit regular use. There is a need to cover the curriculum in a given amount of time and other non-traditional approaches to teaching take too long. . . . Some students lose out with the traditional way of teaching. I know they're lost but I have to go on for the good of everybody. . . .
>
> I don't think it's a benefit to put a true basic [level] student into the same group [with advanced students]. They don't have the stability of skill to be able to handle that. . . . The basic level student needs to take the life skills arithmetic that they need. There's no reason for them to have any contact with algebraic skills, based on their proficiency level.

> If they happen to catch up, yes, maybe they can pick up something later on but at that level they don't need it. (Grade 9 Math Teacher)

One Grade 9 teacher who recently moved from an elementary school expressed frustration with the "conservative" teaching methods used in the secondary school and especially in the mathematics department, and with his attempts to teach differently:

> Coming from an elementary school it seems like secondary school teaching practices are mainly teacher-centred. I try to be more activity-centred with a bit of traditional approach thrown in so as not to confuse the kids. Kids can't handle entirely different approaches. There needs to be some consistency. . . . I like to do things a little differently. I like to do something different every day. I don't want to stand up in front of the class and talk every day, so some days we do group things, some days we do games. One day the department head popped by my classroom to see what was going on and we were at the front playing a math game. The students were sitting on the desks and they were cheering. They were excited and they were screaming. After he left I went to see him to see what he thought. He said, "Well, they won't be able to sit on their desks next year," so I'm kind of careful about what I do in my math classes now. I try to be a little more conservative. Teachers in the math department want to teach the curriculum not the students and they want to cover the curriculum as quickly as possible. That is understandable because of the Ministry guidelines but not appropriate in any case. (Grade 9 Teacher)

These teachers' comments and observations further illustrate the link between conceptions of education and schooling and the adoption of ideas related to the Transition Years initiatives as identified earlier in the section on need for change.

An elementary school teacher captures the essence of what seems to be at the heart of any resistance to the Transition Years concept and plan:

> A lot of high school teachers think that transition is going from Grade 8 to Grade 9, that's where it begins and that's where it ends, but it consumes so much more than that. . . . I think a lot of [high school teachers] are frightened of letting go of their traditional teaching styles and perhaps trying new ones. (Grade 7/8 Teacher)

It is sensitivity to this very issue that characterizes the administrators' approach to implementation.

Administrative Perspectives on Implementation

Impetus for involvement in the Transition Years Pilot Project came from the principal and vice-principal of Briarwood and the Adolescent Years consultant from central office who were all given the full support of the director. A system Steering Committee, a Central Transition Years Team, mainly consisting of teachers of Grades 7, 8, and 9 from the Briarwood family of schools, and school-based Transition Teams for each school within the family were formed to develop, guide, and monitor the pilot project. The committees had a five-pronged emphasis: research; inservice of committee and transition teachers; networking; analysis of data on existing practice and programs; action projects.

The Central Transition Years Team met regularly to develop a system plan to address the Transition Years theme. The Adolescent Years consultant, although clearly a key player in the Transition Years initiatives, did not assume an explicit leadership role: "It was important for grass roots persons, not central office staff, to act in that capacity. Ownership needs to reside in schools." He opted to play a supportive role and to help bring change to other schools.

Using an action research model instead of what the administration called a "lock-step approach" to implementation (i.e., examine research, do professional development, and implement), the committee began with regular meetings to: study *Rights of Passage* (Hargreaves and Earl, 1990) and literature on cooperative learning and holistic curriculum; reflect on own beliefs and experiences; participate in workshops on adolescents in secondary school; and to identify outcomes. "Content to muck around for a while before we set the problem," the committee took almost a year to begin to formulate a management plan.

Eventually a scheme was developed around the broad theme of transition which included ideas related to curriculum and instruction, assessment and evaluation as set out in *Rights of Passage*, and parent and community involvement. Consensus was reached for areas of focus on student, curriculum, and caring. The plan set out by the committee became the prototype for the school board's management plan. Again mindful of the importance of an inductive approach, not "something coming from top down", the administrators made it a point to "keep the Board at bay" so that the project was not seen as another "Board vision."

To encourage interest and involvement within schools, the committee used a Ministry strategy and put out a call for proposals to schools. All schools submitted. Using what was called a "layering" process, proposals were cross-referenced against the management plan until almost all focus areas were covered.

> Instead of always pushing people to do new and different things, we get them to identify their areas of interest, their centres of experience, and then get them to coordinate everything so that it begins to create focus. . . . In addition to all these good ideas and activities for students and the collegiality that develops among teachers, we're looking at really re-energizing professional development so that we have all kinds of carousel opportunities within our family of schools. . . . We were trying to develop an entrepreneurial spirit among teachers through building commitment and developing a sense of community and ownership around the projects. (Adolescent Years Consultant)

Transition Years was then put on the agenda of Professional Development Days and a regular system of communication between schools was initiated to promote the spread of change. "We were creating internal networks within the Board."

A hint at the aim of systemic and substantive change is gained from the following commentary:

> A paradigm shift is required. We need to move from privacy to partnership so we purposely discourage individual projects and initiatives by individual teachers for their own classrooms. This [Transition Years Project] is too big. . . . It has to be a team approach because there's much more to it than destreaming the class. . . .
>
> We have this partnership idea. We're trying to create partnerships with the community, partnerships with teachers, cross-town partnerships, all sorts of those kinds of things to get the kind of pressure and support that will move us ahead. [Partnerships through such things as cross-panel communication, for example] allow secondary school people to see from elementary people other ways of organizing the school. It helps the process along. (Adolescent Years Consultant)

The concept of pressure and support was a key implementation strategy at both the system and school levels. "With these collaborative project proposals we've created, in [Michael] Fullan's terms, marvellous pressure and support." The intention was to work towards a critical mass of supporters by giving immediate support to entrepreneurs and frontrunners and opportunities for involvement of those mildly interested and not terribly resistant. Together these groups would be able to help having difficulty adjusting to and/or accepting change.

Also key was the recognition of a need to concentrate on preparing the context for gradual and sustained change, "to create a facilitative infrastructure that will allow people an opportunity to talk to each other and try projects. Next year we will bring in more pressure to work through certain sets of questions." (Adolescent Years Consultant) The literature on effective school change played an important role as well. "We try to pay reasonable attention to the change theory literature, trying to keep things practical but also keeping some of those key ideas in mind all the time." (Adolescent Years Consultant)

A similar implementation strategy was used within Briarwood: focusing on the literature, adopting the concept of pressure and support, preparing the context for gradual and long-term change, encouraging partnerships, and building commitment from within. The principal and vice-principal invited the whole staff to be part of the local Transition Years Team. Some opted in and the participation of others was requested. "It was important to have the participation of some great teachers and some with a style different than mine and struggling with my way of being." (Vice-Principal) Also, an attempt was made to have all departments represented.

The principal and vice-principal assumed a supporting role in the development and implementation of plans related to the Transition Years believing that their role was to provide opportunities for teachers to experience success with change efforts and to support those efforts. "Teachers change through the influence of other teachers not from an administrative or central office directive." (Vice-Principal) Consequently, professional development, organized and run by the teachers, was built into each staff meeting.

Those having difficulty adjusting to and/or accepting the concepts and purposes of the Transition Years Project were provided additional assistance, direction, and support by administration through group discussions and the development of special projects related to the Transition Years.

Belief in an inductive approach to change and the importance of providing an infrastructure to support evolutionary change are evident in these comments from the Adolescent Years consultant and vice-principal:

> With the growing interest in all these creative Transition Years projects, teachers begin to recognize that the structure of secondary school the way it is presently constituted militates against doing what they now want to do. . . . They'll want to challenge the schedule of the day and the streaming structure. (Adolescent Years Consultant)
>
> First, we want to concentrate on restructuring the workday to allow teachers to work together and develop an integrated curriculum. Then, when teachers are comfortable with that, we can ease into destreaming. (Vice-Principal)

Implementation from the Perspective of Teachers

> It is clear that the process of implementation was favourably viewed by the teachers. Just looking at the direction our country is taking, the economy, the global community, we need to look a little bit farther down the line and plan what we want to become. I'm really impressed with the strategic planning that our Board is doing because as far as I'm concerned that's taking an active step instead of reacting to things all the time. I think we have to be a lot more proactive and plan for the future. I think things have to be a lot more practical. . . . I'm impressed with the initiative. I think it's a step in the right direction. I think the [appropriate] values are there and the [appropriate] vision is there and it's good to see that we're being more proactive than reactive. I'm glad the Ministry is doing this and I'm happy to be part of this Board as well because I've taken an active role in changing education. (Head Student Services and Teacher)

Change was not viewed as a fiat of administration. Ideas for appropriate direction and needed change for the students were seen as being identified by peers. The involvement of teachers in the promotion and presentation of Transition Years activities at staff meetings was seen as crucial for building commitment from the ground up.

> We've been working really hard at having people within our own family of schools do the professional development. Different people within the Family led sessions on topics relevant to the Transition Years and to the broader system plan (e.g., how to use mega skills as part of your evaluation and how you would incorporate it into your

> planning; problem solving; using learning styles to set up our unit plans; and cooperative learning). (Head Student Services and Teacher)

Promotion of and access to pertinent literature as well as sensitivity to teachers' individual needs, that is, "allowing time for those most resistant to 'buy in' but recognizing that some (a very small %) may never," (Guidance Teacher) were also identified as important factors taken into account in the implementation process.

More than one teacher commented on the open communication policy of administration. Communication and support were seen as essential to success because "everyone is so busy it is not possible to attend all the meetings that go on. It is helpful to have someone keep you from getting lost." (Grade 9 Teacher) Another teacher noted that, "the staff is always updated on Transition Years activities. A lot is happening and we always know. Nothing is done behind closed doors." (Head of Student Services and Teacher) Information on the Transition Years project and activities was communicated via published minutes, reports at every staff meeting, professional development events focused on the transition years, and in the form of handouts and readings intended to help in planning and discussion at the department level. The vice-principal's obvious interest and availability to "talk to people about Transition Years and keep a close eye so that interest and momentum doesn't slip" were also noted.

Respect for those centrally involved in the project and the process being followed was readily apparent. "What's happening here is just amazing. . . . The care and the concern that drives the work is invaluable. I really see a focus on the concern for the student." (Head Student Services and Teacher)

> One of the reasons I wanted to come to Briarwood was because the administration is so receptive to new ideas: try it; see what happens; write it up; propose it; do it. I'm excited about the things that are happening. I think a lot of schools may just sit back and do a lot of reading and a lot of talking and nothing will ever happen. . . . I really believe [change] is going to happen here; things are going to happen and people are going to look to us and say, "How did it work?" (Grade 9 Teacher)

This teacher's description of the administrators' approach to change implementation depicts the congruency between administrators' and teachers' perceptions.

> With policies that affect our school there is a lot of collaboration among our administration, department heads and classroom teachers. Our administration is very much open to changes in policy when they feel there is a need for it. . . . Our school is relatively open and accepting of changes. We had a lot of direction with our Transition Project from people who were well informed. When our Transition Years Committee formed last year we all basically came in ignorant and spent a great deal of time finding out what transition was all about. We had a great deal of direction from the vice-principal and the Adolescent Years consultant as far as reading and research. When it came to the point of having to do something with all the research and studying they guided us with suggestions and options. As a local Transition Team we also had input and got involved in further development of policies and guidelines. It's been a very collaborative group that has developed policies. (Grade 9 Teacher and Transition Years Committee Member)

Implementation approach and strategies are integrally connected to philosophy and style of leadership. A look at perspectives on leadership will round out the exploration of facilitating change through attention to process.

Administrative Perspectives on Leadership

The system as a whole follows a philosophy of "servant leadership" (or participatory leadership). This approach to leadership assumes that every member of a community has an important contribution to make. Members work together as equals sharing ideas, planning, giving feedback, and supporting each other in new efforts emerging at different times and in various ways to assume leadership roles. A commitment to this approach was articulated in various ways by all administration. The principal's and vice-principal's early attempts, upon arrival in the school, to involve students and non-professional staff in decision-making about school activities is an example. With respect to the Transition Years Project in particular, the principal emphasized the importance of student leadership, "In anything we do, we try to seek student opinion." One teacher's perception of the administration's respect for the students is also illustrative.

> The [principal and vice-principal] make themselves available to students. They are very human with the kids, speak to them as one person to another not as an administrator to a student. Students have a positive view of the office. They often comment on how caring, thoughtful, and considerate the administration is. They listen to the

> kids, care about the kids, get involved with what they are doing and try to be there. (Grade 9 Teacher and Department Head)

Outreach to parents for their participation in school decision-making committees and the reliance on teachers as leaders throughout the project are other expressions of the servant leadership approach. Having key people such as students and parents "in the equation not just being informed of the equation" was seen as essential.

Teachers Perspectives on Leadership

Leadership style of the administrators, emphasis on teacher leadership, and on communication were identified as key elements in the change process. One teacher described two teachers extensively involved in the Transition Years Pilot Project within and outside the school as:

> good leaders, well-informed, and with a clear sense of where things should be going for our school and what they would like to see happen. They have a good sense of what seems to be working well and things that we have to go back and improve upon. . . . They spent an incredible amount of time planning and setting up for this year, . . . brought in guests and involved Grade 8 teachers from the family. . . . They took time to go into this very, very well prepared. (Grade 9 Teacher and Department Head)

His confidence in the teacher leadership approach is clear. Another teacher described the administrators' approach to leadership in this way:

> The administration did not tell us what to do. We worked with the administration in the development of the [Transition Years Pilot Project] structure and then the teachers got to take the ball and run with it. What we are going to do in our classrooms now are not things the administration has told us to but things we decided to do. As far as the implementation is concerned, we're doing it right. It's the teachers who are deciding what is good and what is bad and whether we need change. We were given direction from the top on how to get started but once we got started it was given to the teachers to evaluate and to decide whether or not the direction was right. It's not an easy process but we're struggling and it's rewarding. Our teachers are committed. (Grade 9 Teacher)

Change Facilitated by Attention to Substance

Five substance areas were identified as focal points to facilitate change through attention to the Transition Years: school organization for innovative grouping of students; transition; community and parent involvement; innovative inservice; and guidance. A description of project plans and activities in each area and responses and perceptions of those variously involved follows.

School Organization for Innovative Grouping of Students From an Administrative Perspective

As has been indicated, destreaming was not an explicit item on the Transition Years Project agenda; the idea was to create a felt need among the teachers for destreamed classes. "If you cut off the destreaming part and attend to all these other things, you'll want to challenge the schedule of the day and the streaming structure." (Adolescent Years Consultant) The focus in the first year, therefore, was placed on creating opportunities for teachers to work together and on developing an integrated curriculum. The existing Design Technology/Family Studies Program provided an ideal vehicle for such a plan. This program in a significantly modified form was central to the pilot project. Modification and integration of the Design Technology/Family Studies involved: use of facilities and resources in the secondary school; hiring of two resource teachers in the secondary school; and development of new integrated curriculum for Grades 7 and 8. Within the family, each feeder school, in collaboration with the high school, developed an interdisciplinary, project-driven curriculum project that integrated a subject from their curriculum with technology resources and program. Classes and lab work took place in the secondary school in two week blocks. This provided an opportunity for elementary students to spend time in the secondary school, become familiar with the school, and see how integrated curriculum might work, and an opportunity for Grades 7, 8, and 9 teachers to work together.

> By moving the site for Design Technology and Family Studies from an elementary school to here [Briarwood] it created a three-dimensional transition experience. . . By connecting the program to the Transition Years and Orientation it was not perceived as an add on. It made sense, was meaningful, and unobtrusive. (Principal)

Planning for the second year of the project with specific attention to innovative grouping of students into cohorts or "villages" is in progress. A committee was formed to generate alternative scheduling models which were then cross-referenced against a list of teacher- and administrator-generated criteria such as opportunities for interdisciplinary team planning, integrated curriculum, flexible grouping of students, and guidance across the curriculum. This led to the current design under consideration that would be a next step towards destreaming. The model will place students in non-semestered cohort groups with four core teachers and an integrated curriculum designed in four curriculum clusters. Consultants and resource persons will provide support for additional subjects. It is envisaged that such a system will allow teachers to know their students better, allow for gradual consideration of other focus areas thereby making change less threatening, allow for the development of an integrated curriculum, and allow team planning time.

Perceptions and Response of Teachers to Student Grouping and Integrated Curriculum

Involvement of Grade 7 and 8 teachers through cross-panel work primarily through the Design and Technology Program has facilitated, among Grade 9 teachers in particular, a better understanding of: Grade 9 students; how Grades 7 and 8 classes are structured; the kind of education students receive in Grades 7 and 8; and where students' strengths are. According to some Grade 9 teachers, this all helps in preparing for the students in Grade 9. Increased awareness of Grade 9 students has raised awareness of the need to plan and structure classes differently with more activities and more direct and active involvement.

Integrated curriculum, cooperative learning, team teaching, project-driven and activity-based learning are all integral to teaching in one of the elementary feeder schools. One Grade 7/8 teacher described her own and her colleagues' aspirations:

> Our hope is that in Grade 9 everything would be more integrated so that it would match more with elementary school teaching style in order to make the transition a bit easier. A cross-curricular project we developed with high school teachers for the Design and Technology Program was a successful first step. (Grade 7/8 Teacher)

Teachers' responses to the cohort/village system are not yet known since the model was still in the planning stages at the time of the research. It is plausible to speculate, though, that responses to the idea will vary with ideological and subject orientations in much the same way as they did for the Transition Years concept in general. The prospect of a destreamed system is daunting for some primarily in light of perceived demands to follow Ministry guidelines and "cover the curriculum." Recall this teacher's view:

> I try activity-centred learning once in a while but the nature of the subject doesn't permit regular use. There is a need to cover the curriculum in a given amount of time and other non-traditional approaches to teaching take too long. . . . Some students lose out with the traditional way of teaching. I know they're lost but I have to go on for the good of everybody. (Grade 9 Teacher)

Others are more optimistic about the adjustment and seem to have confidence that "eventually things will fall into place."

Destreaming/Cohort Grouping from the Perspective of Students

The students were forthright in their recognition of ability differences and responded variously to being in mixed ability classes in the elementary school and the prospect or reality of streamed and/or destreamed classes in high school. There were two main issues for the students: being with friends and keeping up with the academic demands of the various levels. In most cases students in Grades 7, 8, and 9 were able to see both advantages and disadvantages to a reorganization of student grouping. This Grade 9 student's ambivalence, however, is typical of student perspectives on the issue:

> With the old way of grouping [in elementary school] you're still with your same friends and if you're in the same classroom from three to six or seven hours or whatever time, you're always together and you have the same friends over and over again. But with switching from classroom to classroom, you don't hardly see your old friends like you used to. I guess that's probably why people like my parents tell me "Friends till the end in grade school." That doesn't happen [in high school] because you're rotating classes and you're all in different classes now. . . . Although I kind of miss the old system I think the new system is better because you make so many friends and that's cool. (Grade 9 Student)

Other students recognized the value of "being exposed to many different points of view."

Long class periods and a semestered system promote memorization rather than learning. The students, like the teachers, feel that there is too much work to cover in a short period of time necessitating a certain approach to teaching and learning. "It sometimes gets to the point where you work so hard to get your homework done you forget even the simple things you learned." (Grade 9 Student)

This Grade 7 student's perspective on preferred teaching-learning approach is fairly representative of students in Grades 7, 8, and 9.

> Math can be taught in two ways. The boring, "blah, blah" way which is just talking and talking, or it can be taught in a way that everyone would want to participate, like in a fun way. So if it's being taught in a fun way like maybe doing special activities with it (I notice that some teachers teach in those ways) the students understand it more because it's easier. If you teach in a fun way, in a way that the kids can relate to, it's much better. (Grade 7 Student)

Many students commented on their preference for more interactive teaching-learning approaches but those in high school recognized the time element involved and the incompatibility of the current evaluation system with such approaches.

> Sometimes it's easier for me to work by myself so I get my work done. When you have group discussions and stuff, you get your work done but you get distracted at the same time. I think you get the work done faster when you're by yourself but you get more input when you hear different peoples' points of view like when you're having a discussion. Sometimes working in a group sets you back because you have to go around and explain things to those who might not have understood. It's easier if people already know it so you can go, "Okay what do you think about it?" and write it down instead of, "Well, it means this. It means that. Now what do you think about it?" It's quicker. (Grade 9 Student)

The above comment strongly supports the comment of a teacher quoted earlier.

Finally, we hear the students hint at issues of streaming. In addition to this student's comment, recall the perspective presented earlier regarding workload and streaming. This Grade 9 (advanced level) student's story is an example of how the current streamed system is forcing certain patterns of teaching, learning, and schooling.

> One day we're talking about one thing and the next day we're on to something else and there's no time to go back. Even though [some teachers] try to break things down into smaller portions and offer extra help for those of us who get behind no one wants to come back at lunch to get extra help so we usually just move on and try to catch up

> ourselves. . . . Sometimes it's not possible to go to extracurricular events for fear of falling too far behind. There's a basketball tournament on Thursday and I didn't want to go because I was afraid I would get too far back in science. And we have math work too. I just couldn't go because you'd have to catch up on that lab and all the work they did [in class] plus go back and do your work for today and I'd just get too much behind, so I just said, "Forget it." I just stayed to get my science work done. (Grade 9 Student)

Administrative Perspectives on Transition Activities (Programs linking elementary and secondary panels)

A three-phased orientation program, planned by Grade 8 and 9 teachers, based on "worst fears" expressed by students, was designed to facilitate the transition from elementary to high school and to strengthen cross-panel communication among students and teachers. Phase 1 focused on pre-Grade 8 students involving them in storytelling, performing arts, research skills and marketing workshops primarily organized and led by senior secondary students. Phase 2 was an orientation program for Grade 8 students. The core orientation program involved: meetings of guidance, administrative, and intermediate teaching staff; fall and winter visits of guidance staff to Grades 7 and 8 classrooms; classroom visits by secondary students to provide Grade 8 students with information on high school student culture and code of behaviour; parent information sessions; tours of Briarwood; regular visits by Grade 8 students to Briarwood throughout winter and spring terms (While in school for the Design Technology/Family Studies Program, Grade 8 students had opportunities to visit classrooms, cafeteria, computer labs, library.); student progress review meetings; a peer welcoming program in June; a student dance sponsored by the Student Council to which parents were invited and which both elementary and secondary teachers attended; tournaments and opportunities for participation in various cross-panel integrated studies projects; cross-panel work experience; and career education programs. Because the Grade 8 orientation was connected with the Design Technology Program, there were no additional expenses associated with transporting Grade 8 students to the school.

Phase 3 took place at the end of Grade 8 orientation and focused on the transition to secondary school. Orientation activities included: a mini-timetable session; meeting Grade 9 home room teachers and locating classrooms; cross-panel information sharing; early and ongoing identification of at risk and special needs students; and support programs such as teacher mentoring, peer helper program, guidance case manager system, collaborative team meetings, and special education and supportive intervention. Orientation activities were planned by the Student Council with emphasis on welcoming new students to the school community and helping them become comfortable and familiar with school routines and culture.

Teachers' Perceptions and Response to Transition

The Design Technology/Family Studies Program was seen by the teachers as a central transition vehicle for bridging the elementary-secondary school gap both for teachers and students, for helping the students become more familiar with the secondary school and its routines, and for alleviating some of their early fears. Teachers observed a marked difference in the Grade 9 students' level of comfort and early affinity commenting on how they "don't stand out as much now," "seem at home and very comfortable," "don't seem to feel like they're at the bottom of the totem pole," "don't refer to themselves as 9ers," and "seem to have a good sense of themselves as people and individuals."

A "group of people who are really interested and keen to work with Grade 9 students" formed a Homeroom Advisory Council to develop a core orientation curriculum in addition to but integrated with subject curriculum. The orientation curriculum included: orientation to school climate, rules, expectations; study skills; societal issues; violence and conflict mediation; physical health and well-being; and career planning.

The Peer Helper Program was also seen as a key factor in facilitating student transition. The Guidance teacher saw the senior students as having a key role in helping to dispel some of the myths surrounding orientation, providing support and help once relationships started to develop, and encouraging student contact with the Guidance Office. Another teacher also commented on the change in attitude and behaviour of the senior students toward the newcomers as well as on the extent of voluntary involvement of senior students in the elementary school.

Transition from the Perspective of Students

As indicated earlier, there is still a predictable level of anxiety, uncertainty, and apprehension among students preparing to enter secondary school. The attempts at easing the transition, however, have not gone unnoticed. Students mentioned activities such as exam simulation, study skills presentations, and the Design Technology/Family Studies Program as helping to prepare them for Grade 9.

Community and Parental Involvement from the Perspective of Administration and Teachers

Encouraging parent involvement in the school has perhaps been the most difficult goal to meet because of attitudinal differences between parents on the one hand and administrators and teachers on the other toward the role of parents in "the school's business." Activities in this focus area included: outreach through newsletters; information evenings; invitations for involvement in school activities; parenting workshops; and involvement in the career information centre. A request was issued for the participation of parents from all schools in the family in the restructuring of the secondary school with the goal of having parents adopt the family of schools concept from Kindergarten to OAC and to help parents "see that secondary schools care about kids." Administrators and teachers both reported slow gains being made in this area. "Parent involvement is beginning to happen. Strategies such as parent committees and groups, information nights, and the orientation dance are working but we need to continue this emphasis." (Grade 9 Teacher)

Perspectives of Students on Parent Involvement

Student reports on parent involvement in the school concur with those of teachers and administrators. The difference is that the students, for the most part, are satisfied with the level of parent involvement. Students offered language and cultural barriers as well as busy work schedules as explanations for the low level of parent involvement indicating a tendency or perceived need for more involvement only if problems arise. From the students' perspective little visible involvement in no way indicated a lack of interest or commitment.

> [My parents] don't come to the PTA meetings or whatever but they're very involved in my schoolwork and stuff. They're involved just right. . . . They come to meet the teachers and ask questions and my mum was at every one of those meetings about Grade 8s going to Grade 9. (Grade 9 Student)

Innovative Inservice

It is difficult to discuss the substance of inservice disassociated from process. In this project, inservice was integrally linked to the overall process of program development and implementation. This section, therefore, contains only an overview of the kind of inservice opportunities provided for various committees, groups, and individuals involved in the Transition Years Project. A more comprehensive and qualitative sense of this focus area is found earlier in the report.

At all levels, committees were formed to ensure coherence in professional development initiatives and participation. Principals were introduced to the Transition Years concept and objectives at the Family of Schools Principals' Council and were directed to establish local transition years teams with an emphasis on cross-panel involvement. Regular updates, reports on visitations and networking activities, and information sharing took place at council meetings and principals participated in sessions on research informing the Transition Years.

The Family of Schools Central Transition Team met regularly as a group and with the Central Steering Committee to study, reflect, plan, and discuss ideas, research, and plans for the Transition Years Pilot Project. Workshops on cooperative learning, action research, and adolescent needs informed their work as did discussions with members of other committees.

Introduction of the pilot project to the family of schools staff was made by the Central Steering Committee. A Rights of Passage workshop was given by members of the Steering Committee and the Adolescent Years consultant and responses were requested to a presentation on the Ministry consultation paper on the Transition Years.

The Briarwood school-based team was introduced to the project aims and objectives by the Central Transition Team and were urged to develop a school action plan. The Central Team provided current research information and assigned key readings for further consideration. School-based professional development days were then planned with a focus on transition. Weekly meetings took place to organize the School Management Plan and a full Transition Study Day was set aside to discuss significant research, form consensus on beliefs and strategies, and to begin a response to the Transition Consultation Paper.

Professional development activities for all Briarwood staff included: a visitation to the Technology in Education Centre to explore interdisciplinary curriculum using contemporary technology (in preparation for Design Technology/Family Studies Program); film presentation highlighting the need for a paradigm shift for creative problem solving with direct reference to the Design and Technology program; conflict mediation training; workshops on student assessment; professional development day for all staff for guided discussion on characteristics and needs of early adolescent learners, exploration of own knowledge and research, and development of strategies to align student needs and school practices; and a session on using student assessment data for school improvement. Teachers, administrators, and support staff from the family of schools and central office attended various conferences and made site visitations outside the school board. A workshop on integrated curriculum, cooperative learning/collaborative teaching was offered on a voluntary basis (with the hope for full eventual participation) to all staff in the family of schools. Each participating school sent a team of professionals and voluntary attendance was around 90 per cent. Study groups and committees were formed within the school to address various curriculum topics. The Adolescent Years Consultant played a key role in these groups in efforts to facilitate Transition Years initiatives.

System-wide professional development involved networking with other Transition Years schools and presentations by Ministry personnel.

Guidance and Special Education from the Administrators' Perspective

A guidance and special education focus for facilitating student transition resulted in programs and activities such as: teacher mentoring, "Care for a Kid"; a two-credit cooperative program for high needs students; a personal life management program for high needs students with emphasis on self-esteem and personal responsibility (involving work placements within family); conflict mediation training; special education monitoring (involving work with elementary staff to develop profiles of special needs students, provide individual counselling and referral to support group, and monitor student adjustment to secondary school); and analysis of data on student achievement and performance to determine institutional practices, assessment strategies and supportive intervention practices.

Perceptions and Response of Teachers

According to the guidance department visits to elementary schools throughout the year helped students become familiar with some of the secondary school staff and its programs, introduced students to OSIS, helped them with course selection, and helped the guidance department identify at-risk students for additional support. A youth care worker met with each identified student as a welcome and to establish contact and gauge initial adjustment. All Grades 7 and 8 teachers were invited to participate in the identification of students and to set up registration.

Through a Peer Mentoring Program, a group of senior students visited the elementary schools along with guidance teachers to field questions on, for example, uniform policy, cafeteria, workload, and course difficulty and to provide information on study skills and make presentations to students. The guidance office was involved with Student Council to provide ongoing orientation to familiarize students with the building, and to provide opportunities to meet with a few teachers and staff in order to diffuse some initial concerns and anxieties. Senior students also explained how the guidance department and student services work.

The focus on facilitating transition through Guidance had promising results for the guidance department. Earlier identification of and familiarity with at-risk students made earlier intervention possible and students were more apt to talk about family problems and seek counselling earlier (In the past, students were not likely to approach guidance staff at all). There was a general sense that students felt part of the school community earlier. New Grade 9 students, for example, were more involved in summer and extracurricular activities earlier (as much as 1 year sooner than before). On the whole, as a result of the Transition Years focus on guidance, the guidance department felt much more proactive with new students.

Perspectives of Students on Guidance

Grade 8 students cited earlier acknowledged the kind of preparation for Grade 9 provided by the guidance department. Students in high school, however, were ambivalent about the role and importance of those in guidance positions. It is difficult to determine the root of opposing perceptions but in this case it may be due to different circles of need. The latter student was identified as an at-risk student and, therefore, perhaps more familiar with the guidance office and personnel. The former student likely had very little personal experience with the Guidance Office.

> They say you can go to guidance counsellors or to your [peer] helpers but no one really goes, not unless you're really on the verge of doing something totally weird, or you need help with the courses. Otherwise you just go to your friends and they'll try and give you the best advice they can. I guess [most people] don't feel comfortable going to total strangers about all their problems. (Grade 9 Student)

> [Guidance] is a very good helpful place if you have troubles, which I know a lot of people have. They always go there and talk about problems with their group helpers and stuff and that's really good. . . . If they have troubles or problems they have to discuss and they don't know who to go to, that's a very good place to go. I don't know if I would go because I've heard a lot of people say that if you come to them with a really good personal problem, they call your parents, so that's one thing I'm not very fond of. If it's very secretive and if you go there and spill your guts and all that, and then all of a sudden you get home and your parents know about it because your Guidance Counsellor gave them a call home and told them everything, that's very bad. (Grade 9 Student)

Efforts to restructure (in the broadest sense) the education system are well underway in the Briarwood family of schools. Through attention to process and substance significant steps have been taken toward systemic and substantive change. Alongside the optimistic view that "change is going to happen here" is a sense of frustration over the existence of certain attitudinal and institutional barriers that need to be removed for progress to continue. A description of these along with other emergent issues will lead to a concluding discussion of key learnings of change and transition in the Briarwood family of schools.

Emerging Issues for Administrators

Institutional Barriers to Change

The main institutional barriers, according to administration, are the departmental and scheduling structures of the secondary school.

> "Without proper structuring good ideas can disappear in a week" is one of our favourite quotations. Although a lot of people discount that, the medium does hold a lot of clues to the message. . . . With the growing interest in all these creative Transition Years Projects, teachers

> begin to recognize that the structure of secondary school the way it is presently constituted militates against doing what they now want to do. (Adolescent Years Consultant)

Providing opportunities for teachers to work together is the key to success; however, the secondary school structure does not allow teachers to work together during normal work hours. As the vice-principal observed, "The teachers have a lot of creativity but they never get a chance to sit down and use it." Because the present structure will not support the kind of changes teachers want to make, many teachers have had to operate outside the existing workday structure and invest considerable personal time and energy to Transition Years activities. The vice-principal is concerned that, unless the structure to support new approaches is put in place, those most passionately committed to the change efforts will eventually lose interest. Her example of two Grade 7 and 8 teachers who spent approximately 400 hours of their own time developing an integrated curriculum and were "so burnt out by the end of the year they could hardly keep their heads up" is a case in point.

The principal also raised concern over the scheduling system of the secondary school because "It doesn't allow for the kind of caring curriculum we want to extend over from the elementary school. It is difficult for teachers to take an integrated approach and work together." The challenge, as articulated by the vice-principal, is to find ways of helping teachers become more personally and authentically involved with students in a more caring and holistic way without making them feel more overburdened with work. Finding alternatives to the division of labour and subject orientation inherent in the departmental structure where, for example, "English teachers teach English and guidance teachers teach guidance and there is no connection between the two" are seen as necessary next steps.

A related issue and perceived barrier to the kind of change envisaged is pupil/teacher ratio or class size: "Meaningful relationships come with smaller groups of people and with teachers who care. If we continue to throw teachers 200 kids a semester or year how can they possibly treat them as human beings and show them that they do care?" (Vice-Principal)

Organized groups were also identified as barriers to progress. Of some concern for the administration is a vocal group of parents (mostly of advanced level students) who are opposed to destreaming and who are making their views against destreaming known throughout the school system and the community. Allocation

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of resources and job protection clauses set out in the collective agreement with the Teachers' Federation were also seen as standing in the way of change.

Attitudinal Barriers to Change

The Transition Years initiatives require a certain intellectual and ideological commitment. Attitudes and beliefs inconsistent with those underlying the Transition Years Pilot Project are seen as significant barriers to progress. As was indicated earlier in the report, considerable change has taken place, but administrators are still concerned over how to encourage those few "program-driven rather than student-driven" teachers who are still most resistant, least flexible and having most difficulty with seeing new ways of doing things. "Their attitude is inconsistent with our aims and philosophy of an inclusive community and celebrating individuals. They have an embedded philosophy that is not in harmony with this whole thing. A personalized curriculum is non-negotiable." (Adolescent Years Consultant) The administrators see it as their task and challenge to help teachers opposed to or fearful of destreaming or an integrated curriculum overcome those fears and see new possibilities in new ways of working together and integrating curriculum. Helping teachers to realize that all change initiatives are interrelated (not separate add-ons) and in the interest of a common goal of helping students learn were also on their agenda of challenges to meet.

The goal of improving home-school communication and increasing parental involvement in the day to day activities and decision-making of the school is yet to be satisfactorily attained. Cultural and language differences are significant barriers to overcome.

Emerging Issues for Teachers

Institutional Barriers to Change

The congruency of emergent issues for administrators and teachers was a pleasant revelation. Reforming the workday and institutional structure of the secondary school were identified as central priority issues--the key to change. Teachers were adamant about the need for more time and opportunity to work together if any of the proposed changes are to be fully realized. As one teacher observed, "Nothing can happen until teachers are given time to sit down as a group and plan." (Head of Student Services and Teacher) Time availability and the schedule of the workday were seen as the biggest obstacles to facilitating cross-panel communication. Moves toward an integrated curriculum are not possible without common planning time to establish consistent goals and expectations for students.

> Time is our biggest constraint. Release time has alleviated some of our stress but if we do get to a point where there are no funds available for teachers to be able to get together, we're going to burn out our teachers. . . . The restructuring of our timetable would alleviate some of the time constraints but, again, that depends on the pupil/teacher ratio and what sort of playing around with our schedule we can do. . . . Our problem with involvement and attendance at meetings has not been due to lack of interest, it's been due to physical inability to get everybody in the same place at the same time. . . . Also, time for interdisciplinary planning would help to facilitate interdisciplinary teaching. (Grade 9 Teacher)

The departmental structure of the secondary school was seen as another institutional barrier to change: "High school is set up for people to work in isolation. It's time we got out of that isolation, out of departmental structure, subject-orientation." (Grade 9 Teacher)

Existing evaluation policies and practices were also seen as barriers since they are incompatible with the kind of curriculum and grouping changes underway. As one teacher observed, "We need a more appropriate system of evaluation and reporting to parents. It is too easy in the secondary school not to get to know the kids. The system of reporting in elementary school requires you to get to know them. There is no such requirement in secondary school." (Grade 9 Teacher) Another remarked that the development and introduction of new evaluation policies will be a struggle for teachers:

> Evaluation policies are going to have to be vastly different and at this point teachers don't know how to make things so vastly different That's where the help is going to have to come. We need a great deal of inservice on alternative methods of evaluation and there will have to be public education of parents and students so that they understand how evaluations work. (Grade 9 Teacher)

It is worth noting here that the development of a new evaluation system was undertaken as a school-based project in one of the feeder schools as part of the pilot project. In other words, change of this kind is on the agenda.

Attitudinal Barriers to Change

Again, the similarity between teachers' and administrators' perceptions of attitudinal barriers to change are striking. The need to continue to work at changing parental attitudes towards school and their views about the boundary between home and school responsibility was as much of a concern for teachers as administrators. The main concern, however, was with the attitudes of some teachers. Comments pointed once again to the critical link between practice and belief and the need for a paradigm shift to occur among those experiencing difficulty accepting the Transition Years initiatives.

> Until we get away from that philosophy that the subject is more important than the student, I don't know that [more cross-panel and collaborative work] will happen. There are still some people who have been around for a long time and they're good at what they do but their focus is curriculum. They're too used to having the Ministry say, "Now this is what you have to have taught by the end of the year." . . . They just have to have their task done. They're very inflexible. (Head of Student Services and Teacher)

This Grade 9 teacher clearly summarized the situation in Briarwood. Her reflections bring us back to the beginning and remind us of the intended scope of the Transition Years Pilot Project and the initial conceptualization from which the project developed. Her remarks also reflect the expectation and acceptance of change as a gradual and evolving process.

> The biggest issue right now with teachers is getting a handle on the whole idea of transition and helping the teachers realize that transition doesn't necessarily mean destreaming. The uneducated teacher who hasn't had any background on transition automatically equates transition with destreaming. Once teachers understand that destreaming is only a minor aspect of transition and can approach the idea in a positive light, the programs are likely to be more easily developed. We're still at a stage where we're still having to educate some of our teachers on the whole idea of transition. We have come a long way. We are much further along than we were a couple of years ago but there is still education that needs to be done. (Grade 9 Teacher and Transition Years Committee Member)

Emergent Issues for Students

Analysis of conversations with and observations of students led to the identification of three main issues of concern. It is clear that the current system places expectations and demands on students which encourage them to make certain choices sometimes at considerable cost. In Advanced Level classes, where the pressure to cover a certain amount of material in a brief period of time for the purpose of satisfactory test performance, the students are pressed to conform to traditional didactic teaching approaches. Even though many prefer interactive, activity-based learning, there is no time to learn that way. They comply in the interests of expediency. Workload demands also force some students to opt out of participation in extracurricular activities. Some may opt for lower track classes in order to keep up with other than academic activities, including part-time work which is essential for many students. And, once in the non-academic tracks, the system takes care of future career options and the teachers are left to deal with the "nightmare [General and Basic Level] classes" where the students manifest the psychological impact of their relegated status in various socially and personally inappropriate ways often disengaging from school altogether. The characterization of attention to Transition Years as an equity issue is exemplified in these scenarios.

The idea of cohort grouping does not sit well with Grade 8 and 9 students who want the high school experience to be significantly different from elementary school. One Grade 8 student couldn't see the "point of having high school if it's going to be the same as elementary." It is clear that high school, as it is currently structured and operated, has a symbolic significance in students' development. From an academic perspective, however, the idea of cohort grouping seems less unreasonable.

Engagement in learning is another critical issue for students. There is no question that many students fail to see the relevance of some subject matter and have difficulty engaging with much of what is taught. Although inappropriate pedagogy was cited by many as a source of disengagement, this student's comment points to some of the other issues underlying the problem of engagement: "Some of the courses are extremely boring. Some days you're in and some days you're out because of tiredness and stress or because of homework and other stuff." (Grade 9

Student). It is clear that the problem of academic commitment is much more than a pedagogical issue.

Learnings of Change and Transition

The story of transition at Briarwood continues. Indeed, it could be said that it has only just begun. After much preparation, the stage is set, finishing touches are being put on the script, and roles are being negotiated. Assessment of progress to date is open to interpretation. Reviews will vary depending on the vantage points of those involved and those looking on. It is neither appropriate nor possible to make definitive claims about success or failure of attempts to address issues related to the transition years since such judgements are inherently tied to individual goals, expectations, and beliefs. It is possible and worthwhile, however, to identify some key points that seem to be linked to varying perceptions of success. These are general lessons to be learned from the story.

Transition Broadly Defined

Change initiatives developed around a broad definition of transition hold promise for lasting and substantive reform. The Transition Years initiatives addressed by the pilot project broadly define much more than a period of situational change and adjustment for students. They take into account societal, psychosocial, and physical transitions experienced as a result of: development through puberty to young adulthood; movement from dependence on home and parents to independence and interdependence; movement towards greater interdependence for teachers and schools; the transitional state of communities and society; the state of flux in schools brought about by societal demands and staff changeovers; and new teachers' transition to profession and workplace.

Transition Years Project as Integral Part of School and System Plan

In the Briarwood family of schools, the Transition Years Pilot Project was "never intended as a destreaming or restructuring (narrowly defined) initiative." The aim was to achieve systemic and substantive change and the pilot project was considered to be "a vehicle that would have a rich enough capacity to carry broader change." Initiatives were linked to existing school goals and to the overall system plan and thus were neither conceptualized nor perceived as an "add on." Folding the project into existing programs (e.g., the Design and Technology/Family Studies

Program), plans (e.g., to become a "kid-centred school"), and principles (e.g., the theme of celebrating people and the Principle of the First Call) gave the Transition Years Pilot Project in Briarwood scope and significance. A more narrowly focused conceptualization of transition might well have been perceived as another new (and likely short-lived) idea. There is no evidence to suggest that this was the popular attitude or response to the Transition Years at Briarwood.

Restructuring Broadly Defined

Like transition, the concept of restructuring was broadly defined at Briarwood to include: student grouping; attitudes and perspectives of teachers; departmental differences related to attitudes and perspectives of teachers; nature and schedule of workday; expectations and workload demands of both students and teachers; school culture and physical context; and curriculum. In short, changes addressing issues related to the Transition Years involved perspectival and institutional structures.

A restructuring of the work day may be the single most important factor for facilitating reform related to Transition Years goals. This kind of restructuring would provide teachers time and opportunity to strengthen cross-panel and cross-department links and thereby work towards curriculum reform, engage in professional development activities to enhance their understanding of reform efforts, engage in joint work, and maintain their enthusiasm and passion for teaching. "The present structure won't support the kinds of changes teachers want to make. Those most passionate will eventually lose interest or burn out if a structure is not in place to support new approaches."

Teachers do not have sufficient time to understand and learn new teaching approaches and changes. Students do not have enough time to understand and learn the material with which they are presented. A restructuring of the work day would provide the facilitative superstructure required.

Destreaming

The current system of streaming works. What it does, however, is exactly what the administrators and many teachers criticize it for doing. Even those teachers who support the streamed system because of its pedagogical expediency admit that it is less than adequate, and unfair. And from students we get a sense of what the current system demands of them and how they are forced to respond. To achieve the central and long-range goals of systemic and substantive change it is clear that a more equitable and reasonable (for both teachers and students) system is required. The need for and significance of such a change attempt was recognized at Briarwood. Instead of placing it at the centre of change of the agenda, however, destreaming was considered as a secondary focus in Transition Years initiatives or as an outcome of curricular changes and a restructured work day. In other words, priority was given to preparing the context for a destreamed system. Introducing destreaming in this way is likely to be more easily and effectively adopted.

Conceptions of Education and Schooling and the Transition Years

A sound, well-established, and articulated guiding philosophy and vision offer conceptual coherence to change efforts. If that philosophy is based on principles consistent with those underlying the proposed changes, efforts related to those changes are less upsetting. At Briarwood, the principles of servant leadership and the First Call were already well-grounded in school board plans and policies. The Transition Years Pilot Project, therefore, made sense and fit in with an already existing ideological structure.

At an individual level, however, perceptions of the need for and response to institutional change initiatives and attempts to facilitate change in teaching practices vary with an individual's conception of schooling, purpose(s) of education, the role of the teacher, and orientation to curriculum. Differing interpretations and understandings of curriculum orientations are reflected in classroom practice. Moving from a transmission to a transformation orientation to curriculum requires new lenses not just different frames. In other words, moving from a teacher- to a student-centred curriculum requires the development of entirely new ways of thinking and seeing, not merely new ways of doing. To effect substantive and systemic change, the central focus needs to be on underlying values and beliefs. Initial and ongoing examination of individual and institutional beliefs, attitudes, and values and those underlying change initiatives can lend the kind of coherence needed for deep and lasting change. All those involved in the implementation of change need this kind of opportunity.

Leadership and Approach to Change

Characteristics and philosophy of leadership are reflected in strategic approaches to change. In the Briarwood family of schools, several elements in the overall approach to the introduction and implementation of change stand out: focusing on preparing the context for change rather than on implementing change ("patiently building a rich infrastructure"); making deliberate attempts to prepare the context through community building; utilizing an action research model rather than a more traditional approach to implementation; investing time and opportunity for initial conceptualizing and planning ("being content to muck around for a while before we set the problem"); developing plans through consensus and achieving consensus on students, curriculum, and caring as areas of focus; and placing equal emphasis on the need for both attitudinal and structural change.

Leadership style, personality, strength in commitment, level of direct involvement in the day to day operation of the school and with students, and behavioral consistency are among the many personal characteristics that seem to influence teachers' and students' perceptions and thereby affect responses to proposed changes. Age and gender also may be factors. In addition and in this case, a well-grounded and long-standing vision of change considered within the multiple contexts of school, school board, community, and society seemed to engender confidence in change proposals and plans introduced by school leaders.

How leadership is defined and practised, not surprisingly, has a primary influence on efforts to bring about change. Practising the concept of servant (or participatory) leadership by placing value on and giving respect to the contribution of students and teachers is probably one of the most important factors influencing change efforts at Briarwood and, indeed, in the system at large.

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7.

L'École Secondaire du Sud-Ouest

par

Diane Gérin-Lajoie et Laurette Lévy

Le projet pilote des années de transition de la section de langue française du conseil scolaire des écoles séparées à l'étude implique l'école secondaire du Sud-Ouest ainsi que trois écoles élémentaires. Le projet, en plus d'adresser divers secteurs de concentration tels que définis par le ministère de l'Éducation de l'Ontario, a aussi misé sur le renouveau francophone à l'intérieur de la réalité scolaire, voire même communautaire, de ce milieu.

Lorsque le ministère de l'Éducation de l'Ontario a annoncé, au début de 1990, qu'il y aurait des fonds disponibles pour des projets s'adressant spécifiquement aux années de transition, la section de langue française du conseil scolaire a vu là l'occasion de développer un plan d'action pour améliorer l'éducation de langue française dans cette région du sud de la province où les francophones sont de plus en plus assimilés à la majorité anglophone et où l'influence américaine est sans doute à son plus fort.

Contrairement au nord et à l'est de la province où se retrouve la majorité des francophones vivant en Ontario et où la communauté est bien établie, les francophones du sud de la province, en plus d'être peu nombreux, sont dispersés géographiquement, ce qui entraîne un isolement souvent difficile à surmonter. Ceci a souvent pour conséquence d'accélérer le phénomène de l'assimilation au groupe majoritaire. De là l'importance pour le groupe minoritaire de développer un réseau solide d'institutions. Une de ces institutions, l'école, joue un rôle de premier plan pour le groupe francophone minoritaire. L'éducation en milieu minoritaire diffère en effet de celle en milieu majoritaire en ce sens que l'institution scolaire constitue un élément essentiel pour la survie de sa communauté, ce qui lui confère un caractère tout particulier (Gérin-Lajoie, sous presse). En plus de transmettre des connaissances et de socialiser les élèves, elle peut devenir – et dans certains cas elle le devient – un lieu de rassemblement et un milieu de vie pour le groupe minoritaire qu'elle dessert. L'école permet donc aux élèves ainsi qu'à la communauté en général de baigner dans une atmosphère francophone et de participer à des activités qui font la promotion de la langue et de la culture françaises.

Il n'est pas rare que l'école franco-ontarienne représente en quelque sorte le seul endroit où l'enfant fera l'expérience de cette langue et de cette culture. Bien que l'éducation en milieu minoritaire n'enraye pas l'assimilation au groupe majoritaire, elle n'en constitue pas moins une composante essentielle pour la survie de la communauté. De là l'importance de développer un système scolaire bien organisé pour faire face à cette réalité. Or, c'est dans le sud de l'Ontario que le taux d'assimilation est le plus fort pour les francophones. En effet, l'assimilation, dans le centre et le sud-ouest de l'Ontario, progresse deux fois plus rapidement qu'ailleurs dans la province. Près de deux francophones sur trois dans ces régions perdent la capacité de s'exprimer dans leur langue maternelle au cours de leur vie, comparativement à environ 25 pour cent dans l'est et le nord-est de la province (ministère des Collèges et Universités, 1989b). On constate aussi que, souvent, les francophones qui ont fréquenté l'école de langue française à l'élémentaire passent aux écoles de langue anglaise lorsqu'ils arrivent au secondaire. Tel est le cas dans le conseil scolaire que nous avons étudié. Les écoles de langue française avaient fait face, en effet, à un problème assez sérieux en ce qui concerne le recrutement d'élèves et de personnel enseignant au cours des années précédentes. La mise sur pied d'un projet pilote s'avérait donc un excellent moyen pour aider à la réorganisation des écoles de langue française. C'est un peu avec ces idées en tête que la section de langue française du conseil scolaire a élaboré son projet pilote des années de transition, voyant là une occasion de pouvoir rejoindre les élèves de l'élémentaire afin de susciter leur intérêt pour des études secondaires en langue française et, par conséquent, d'augmenter l'effectif à l'école secondaire de langue française.

1. L'école et son milieu

Les écoles de langue française du conseil scolaire étudiées se trouvent dans un secteur rural du sud-ouest de la province. Dans cette région, le pourcentage d'individus ayant le français comme langue maternelle s'élève à 2.4 pour cent. Les principaux secteurs d'activités économiques chez les francophones sont les industries manufacturières, les services, le commerce ainsi que l'agriculture. Plus de 80 pour cent des francophones du sud-ouest sont des cols bleus, comparativement à 37 pour cent dans le centre de la province. En ce qui a trait à l'éducation, la proportion des francophones de la région qui ont poursuivi des études postsecondaires est inférieure à la moyenne provinciale (ministère des Collèges et Universités, 1989b).

Historiquement, l'école secondaire de langue française de ce conseil scolaire appartenait au conseil scolaire public de la région. Ce n'est qu'en 1986 qu'elle passa sous la juridiction du conseil scolaire catholique, rejoignant ainsi les écoles élémentaires de langue française. L'école secondaire faisait alors face à un problème sérieux de baisse d'effectif scolaire. En effet, un nombre grandissant d'élèves des écoles élémentaires de langue française s'inscrivaient à l'école secondaire de langue anglaise du conseil. Au moment où les écoles ont été reprises par le système catholique, 35 pour cent seulement des jeunes francophones des écoles élémentaires de langue française poursuivaient leurs études secondaires en français. À cette époque, l'école secondaire offrait un nombre restreint de programmes d'études et se concentrait sur l'offre de cours de niveau avancé. Les parents déploraient, entre autres, le fait que leurs enfants n'aient pas accès à des cours techniques. Avec un effectif scolaire allant toujours en diminuant (il y avait 56 élèves inscrits à l'école en 1986) la survie de l'école secondaire du Sud-Ouest était sérieusement en jeu. L'administration au niveau du conseil scolaire a alors décidé qu'il fallait, d'une part, améliorer les programmes et d'autre part, aider les élèves à développer une certaine estime de soi en tant que francophones. En septembre 1991, le nombre d'élèves à l'école secondaire du Sud-Ouest s'élevait à 159, ce qui constitue un taux de persévérance de plus de 85 pour cent des élèves de la huitième à la neuvième année, c'est-à-dire, un gain de 50 pour cent en quelques années seulement.

Le projet pilote des années de transition que l'on retrouve à l'école secondaire du Sud-Ouest implique également trois des quatre écoles élémentaires de langue française des villages environnants. Les écoles de langue française représentent 25 pour cent du nombre total d'écoles de ce conseil scolaire : on y trouve une école secondaire (école secondaire du Sud-Ouest - 159 élèves dont 38 en 9^{e} année) ainsi que quatre écoles élémentaires (St-Clet - 391 élèves; St-Tite - 186 élèves; St-Janvier - 130 élèves; et St-Ange - 160 élèves).

L'école secondaire du Sud-Ouest ainsi que l'école St-Clet sont toutes deux situées dans le village même. Seule une rue les sépare. L'école St-Tite, pour sa part, se trouve dans un petit village situé à quelques minutes de l'école secondaire du Sud-Ouest. L'école St-Janvier, d'un autre petit village environnant, est celle des écoles nourricières qui est la plus éloignée de l'école secondaire. Elle possède aussi la particularité de regrouper des élèves anglophones et des élèves francophones sous le même toit. En effet, on retrouve l'élémentaire francophone, de la maternelle à la 8^{e} année, ainsi que le niveau intermédiaire anglophone de 7^{e} et 8^{e} années. L'administration de cette école est effectuée par une seule direction. Finalement, l'école St-Ange, située dans le petit centre urbain à quelques minutes de l'école secondaire du Sud-Ouest, regroupe les enfants de la maternelle à la 2^{e} année inclusivement. Un taux grandissant d'inscriptions à l'école élémentaire de langue française pendant les dernières années a amené l'ouverture de cette quatrième école, qu'on a choisi d'installer dans une localité qui constitue le centre urbain pour les villages environnants.

Les élèves qui fréquentent l'école secondaire du Sud-Ouest, à l'exception de ceux et de celles qui ont terminé leur 8^{e} année à l'école St-Clet et qui demeurent dans les rues avoisinantes de l'école secondaire, doivent prendre l'autobus scolaire pour se rendre à l'école.

Le personnel enseignant de l'école secondaire du Sud-Ouest se compose de 16 membres, dont quelques uns enseignent aussi dans les trois écoles nourricières. Ces enseignantes et ces enseignants sont originaires de la région même, ainsi que du Québec, du nord de l'Ontario et de la région d'Ottawa. C'est un personnel relativement jeune. La majorité des enseignantes et des enseignants ont moins de cinq ans d'expérience; 3 d'entre eux ont entre 10 et 15 ans d'expérience et un seul d'entre eux a plus de 20 ans d'expérience.

2. La méthodologie utilisée

Les données qui servent à l'étude de cas ont été recueillies en février 1992. Des entrevues semi-dirigées ont été effectuées avec l'adjoint du directeur de l'éducation de la section de langue française du conseil scolaire (qui est le responsable du projet pilote), avec les directions d'école participant au projet, avec la personne-ressource qui coordonne le projet pilote à l'école, de même qu'avec un représentant des services consultatifs du conseil scolaire. Quatorze membres du personnel enseignant des quatre écoles impliquées ont été interviewés, ainsi que dix-huit élèves. Enfin, nous avons rencontré des représentantes et un représentant des associations de parents de ces mêmes écoles. Nous avons également fait de l'observation en salle de classe à l'école secondaire, de même que dans les trois écoles nourricières, afin d'avoir une connaissance plus approfondie du projet pilote.

3. L'élaboration du projet pilote

Les discussions sur l'élaboration d'un projet pilote ont eu lieu tout d'abord au niveau de l'administration du conseil scolaire et des directions d'école. L'adjoint au directeur à l'éducation a vu dans l'élaboration d'un projet pilote une occasion d'améliorer l'éducation de langue française. Comme il l'explique :

> j'ai vu des possibilités tout de suite quand je regardais les projets pilotes qui s'annonçaient... Pour faire bâtir une école secondaire, il faut que tu retournes aux sources qui sont tes écoles nourricières, donc un projet qui s'annonce pour les 7e, 8e et 9e se prête très bien à cela.

La responsable du projet pilote au niveau de l'école secondaire poursuit en disant :

> c'était vraiment pour nous une chance de promouvoir l'école ici, aussi c'est ça qu'on voulait faire... parce qu'on trouvait qu'il y avait beaucoup d'élèves, c'était difficile de garder nos élèves ici, les élèves voulaient toujours partir pour les écoles en ville, parce que c'était plus grand, plus attrayant...

Le personnel enseignant a été consulté par la suite. En ce qui concerne les parents, l'information leur est parvenue par le biais de chacune des écoles impliquées (bulletins d'information, réunions, etc...).

Simultanément à ces discussions (à cause d'un échéancier serré), la section de langue française a créé une équipe de travail afin de préparer la soumission pour le ministère de l'Éducation et de la Formation. Le projet pilote devait impliquer l'école secondaire et les trois écoles nourricières St-Clet, St-Tite et St-Janvier. En effet, la quatrième école élémentaire (St-Ange), ne possédant pas de niveau intermédiaire, n'a pas participé à la demande de fonds. L'équipe de travail a été la suivante : l'adjoint au directeur de l'éducation, les directions des quatre écoles impliquées (qui avaient le mandat d'informer leurs associations de parents respectives sur le contenu de la demande tout au long de la rédaction), une enseignante de 8e année, qui allait devenir par la suite la personne-ressource du projet pilote, et finalement un représentant des services consultatifs du conseil scolaire. Comme l'explique la direction de l'école secondaire :

> On a regroupé les directions d'école, les personnes-ressources ... et on s'est assis une bonne journée puis on a discuté des problèmes qu'on avait avec les élèves de 7, 8, 9. On a commencé à regarder certaines solutions possibles... On a vu qu'il y avait certains projets pilotes qui allaient être déterminés cette année-là. On a regardé les secteurs de concentration, les domaines de spécialisation du projet... puis on a commencé à rédiger un document...

Le projet pilote avait pour objet de réorganiser la structure scolaire afin de donner un enseignement de meilleure qualité aux adolescentes et aux adolescents tout en les respectant et en tenant compte de leur réalité et de celle du milieu minoritaire. C'est à partir de ce concept que le directeur adjoint à l'éducation a développé sa vision du projet :

> cette vision, pour moi, c'est un tremplin vers l'avenir qui s'annonce très prometteur... ça se résume dans le nom "Promo adolescent et adolescente" et puis je veux que tout le monde le sache, les Anglais et les Français... Parce que c'est une réalité qui va exister, qui va être connue... Donc quand tu regardes de ce côté-là, c'est le renouveau francophone basé sur un plan de marketing solide où tout le monde embarque.

Le projet voulait faire place à un renouveau francophone, c'est-à-dire, inciter les jeunes à continuer à étudier en français et à fréquenter l'école secondaire de langue française et ce, grâce à un solide plan de promotion. Le projet pilote s'est déroulé sur deux paliers : à l'élémentaire et au secondaire. Il était important de travailler avant tout au niveau des écoles nourricières, afin que les élèves soient intéressés à venir à l'école secondaire du Sud-Ouest après la 8^{e} année. En ce qui a trait au secondaire, on voulait construire l'image d'une école qui soit moderne, avec de nouvelles installations (gymnase, laboratoires, ordinateurs, etc...), avec des programmes diversifiés donnés par des enseignantes et des enseignants spécialisés dans un ou deux domaines, ce qui attirerait la population scolaire des écoles élémentaires de langue française.

Lorsque le temps fut venu de décider quelles seraient les composantes du projet pilote, le conseil scolaire insista sur l'importance d'inclure tous les champs de concentration tels que définis par le ministère de l'Éducation et de la Formation. Toujours selon le directeur adjoint à l'éducation, pour être en mesure de réorganiser véritablement la structure scolaire au niveau des années de transition, il fallait toucher tous les aspects pouvant influencer la réalité des élèves. Pour lui, l'impact du changement au niveau des années de transition devait se mesurer dans plusieurs domaines à la fois :

> mon idée de projet pilote c'est qu'on est aussi bien de l'essayer dans tous les champs de concentrationpour voir... ça aurait été pour moi artificiel, par exemple, d'essayer quelques classes en tronc commun. On aurait pu, mais c'était pas assez complet et moi je vois l'impact des années de transition dans tout le paquet .

Le projet pilote regroupe donc les secteurs de concentration tels qu'ils ont été définis par le ministère de l'Éducation et de la Formation:

- élaborer un programme de base et de stratégies d'enseignement;
- organiser l'école de façon à favoriser différents regroupements d'élèves;
- faciliter la transition des élèves de la 6^e^ à la 7^e^ année, de la 8^e^ à la 9^e^ année et de la 9^e^ à la 10^e^ année;
- offrir au personnel enseignant de nouveaux programmes de formation en cours d'emploi;
- améliorer les techniques d'évaluation des élèves et les méthodes pour rendre compte de leur rendement;
- amener la communauté à participer au processus de l'éducation, en particulier les parents ou les tuteurs;
- aider les élèves dans leur choix de carrière;
- offrir des programmes et des services d'orientation pour la clientèle scolaire et en particulier pour l'enfance en difficulté;
- assurer l'équité entre les sexes;
- offrir des programmes de rattrapage et d'enrichissement.

De ces secteurs de concentration, ce sont surtout sur les suivants que l'emphase a été mise : un programme de base en français, anglais et religion; la transition des élèves de 7^e^ et 8^e^ années à la 9^e^ année, de même que l'organisation scolaire; enfin, la formation en cours d'emploi pour le personnel enseignant. En fait, on peut dire que c'est sur l'intégration des 7^e^ et 8^e^ années au secondaire qu'on semble insister le plus. Ce secteur de concentration semble aussi être le mieux compris par les intervenantes et les intervenants impliqués de près ou de loin dans le projet pilote.

Plusieurs activités ont été créées surtout dans les secteurs de la transition et celui de la formation en cours d'emploi. En voici des exemples : visites régulières des élèves de 7^{e} et 8^{e} années à l'école secondaire, utilisation des locaux du secondaire par le palier élémentaire, comme le gymnase ou la salle d'ordinateurs, enseignement de certaines matières en 7^{e} et 8^{e} années par des enseignants ou enseignantes du secondaire. En ce qui concerne la formation en cours d'emploi, en voici quelques exemples : des ateliers ont été organisés dans différents domaines, comme l'évaluation et les approches pédagogiques, des visites ont eu lieu dans d'autres écoles pendant la première année du projet, une personne-ressource des années de transition a été mise à la disposition des enseignantes et des enseignants impliqués dans le projet pilote, etc.

Le directeur adjoint à l'éducation a donc vu dans l'annonce des projets pilotes le potentiel de «bâtir une école secondaire de langue française». Pour ce faire, il fallait d'abord retourner aux écoles nourricières afin d'amener les finissantes et les finissants de 8^{e} année à s'inscrire à l'école secondaire du Sud-Ouest. Le projet pilote pourrait ainsi aider à créer de meilleurs liens entre l'élémentaire et le secondaire. En amenant plus d'élèves à l'école secondaire du Sud-Ouest, on favoriserait aussi une réorganisation au niveau du personnel enseignant du secondaire. En effet, dans une petite école, il est pratiquement impossible pour les enseignantes et les enseignants de n'enseigner que dans leurs champs de spécialisation. Bien souvent, ces derniers doivent enseigner des matières avec lesquelles ils ne sont pas familiers. Avec un effectif scolaire plus élevé au secondaire et une participation à l'enseignement élémentaire, on augmenterait sensiblement les chances pour le personnel enseignant de travailler, sinon en totalité, du moins en majeure partie, dans leur spécialité :

> L'autre problème qu'on avait dans ce temps-là qui n'existe plus aujourd'hui, c'était la difficulté de trouver des profs spécialisés... Dans une petite situation comme la nôtre, on n'avait pas assez de sections dans quoi que ce soit pour être à plein temps dans ce temps-là, à 56... c'était une autre réalité... Maintenant, on a deux ou trois personnes dans les matières, dépendant des matières.

On insiste aussi sur l'importance pour les francophones de faire reconnaître que leur réalité est différente de celle des anglophones de la région. Notre interlocuteur déplore le fait qu'au niveau de la section de langue française du conseil «qu'on ait simplement continué à opérer comme les anglophones opéraient». Il poursuit en disant qu'il faut ouvrir l'école à la communauté, qu'il faut penser en termes de projets communautaires pour les francophones de la région, qu'il faut voir l'école non pas seulement comme une institution scolaire mais aussi comme une institution communautaire.

4. Le rôle des directions d'école et de la personne-ressource du projet des années de transition

Les directions d'école ont été impliquées dès le début dans l'élaboration du projet pilote. Même si l'idée de soumettre un projet au ministère de l'Éducation et de la Formation est venue du directeur adjoint à l'éducation de langue française, toutes les directions d'école, à l'élémentaire comme au secondaire, s'entendent pour dire qu'elles ont collaboré activement à l'élaboration du projet pilote. L'adjoint au directeur de l'éducation les a immédiatement mis au courant de ses idées en ce qui a trait aux années de transition et comment ils pourraient bénéficier de l'aide du ministère de l'Éducation et de la Formation. On s'est alors penché sur la question et les directions d'école, en collaboration avec le directeur adjoint à l'éducation, ont écrit la demande de subvention. Comme l'indiquent les commentaires suivants de certains directeurs et directrices :

> c'est vraiment venu de monsieur X (directeur adjoint à l'éducation) qui nous a proposé ça, puis là ensemble nous avons fixé les objectifs du projet. Nous avons formulé le projet ensemble... c'est venu initialement de lui, mais oui, on a travaillé ensemble pour faire le projet.

Int. : Donc c'est pas quelque chose qui est arrivé d'en haut puis qu'on vous a imposé...?

Rép. : Non, ça a été présenté puis ensuite,... on s'est assis puis on a tous travaillé.

Les directions d'école ont servi d'intermédiaires entre le conseil scolaire, le personnel enseignant et les parents des élèves. En effet, lorsqu'on a décidé d'aller de l'avant avec le projet, ce fut leur responsabilité d'impliquer le personnel enseignant, tout en informant et en consultant les parents des élèves.

La direction de l'école secondaire a été particulièrement active dans la mise en oeuvre du projet pilote, étant donné que c'est à l'école secondaire qu'ont eu lieu les activités et que ce sont les enseignantes et enseignants du secondaire qui ont aussi été impliqués dans les écoles élémentaires. Comme la directrice l'a expliqué :

> je voyais beaucoup mon rôle dans le milieu, pour essayer de faciliter la tâche aux professeurs, j'essayais de m'assurer qu'on pouvait aussi aller leur chercher du développement professionnel, parce qu'il y avait beaucoup de développement professionnel à faire... donc mon rôle, je le voyais beaucoup plus comme... aider à coordonner les activités.

Travaillant étroitement avec l'adjoint au directeur de l'éducation, la directrice de l'école secondaire s'est donc vu confié un rôle important dans la mise en oeuvre du projet pilote.

En ce qui concerne la personne-ressource du projet pilote, son rôle a consisté à aider les enseignantes et les enseignants dans leur tâche, tant au niveau élémentaire qu'au niveau secondaire. Elle définit son rôle de la façon suivante :

> mon rôle c'est d'être disponible pour les professeurs de 7, 8 et 9, au point de vue ressources. OK, comme lorsqu'ils ont besoin de ressources pour les aider dans leur enseignement je suis là, euh, j'aime beaucoup ça aller en salle de classe, puis pas comme observatrice, mais plutôt j'aime ça aller enseigner afin de connaître, de rencontrer les élèves...

Le conseil scolaire a créé ce poste pour donner un appui aux enseignantes et aux enseignants impliqués dans le projet pilote en leur fournissant une aide ponctuelle dans certains cas et pour s'occuper de l'organisation des activités reliées aux années de transition. La personne-ressource se retrouvait donc, pour ainsi dire, au centre de la mise en oeuvre, l'intermédiaire entre le conseil scolaire, les directions d'école et le personnel enseignant.

5. Le personnel enseignant

D'après les membres de l'administration interrogés, le personnel enseignant a réagi favorablement au projet pilote. Les enseignantes et les enseignants ont, selon une des directions d'école, fait preuve d'un esprit ouvert et n'ont pas eu peur d'essayer quelque chose de nouveau. Plusieurs personnes de l'administration et du personnel enseignant semblent d'ailleurs expliquer cette collaboration par le fait que la plupart des enseignantes et des enseignants possèdent encore peu d'expérience dans le domaine de l'enseignement. Ils sont donc moins ancrés dans des pratiques déjà bien établies et plus enclins à tenter de nouvelles expériences. De plus, il se peut que certains membres du personnel enseignant aient déjà expérimenté certaines des stratégies pédagogiques préconisées dans le projet pilote lors de leurs stages pratiques. Dans le cas du projet à l'étude, on ne peut que constater la présence certaine d'une ouverture au changement. Voici quelques témoignages à ce propos :

> Le fait d'avoir des débutants, disons comme enseignants dans un tel projet, c'est un avantage, parce que quelqu'un qui débute dans l'enseignement est d'habitude prêt à essayer quelque chose de nouveau.
>
> C'est très positif chez nos enseignants, on a un bon personnel. Tout le monde travaille bien ensemble, pis moi je suis très satisfaite en tout cas, j'aime beaucoup ça, c'est plaisant.
>
> Si tu veux faire fonctionner le projet, faut vraiment que tu aies le personnel qui est prêt à le faire... Ici, oui, on est pas mal dynamique puis on est prêt à le faire, à être flexible, puis accueillant et puis je pense, aussi, une partie de ça c'est le fait qu'on veut que notre école soit vraiment quelque chose de bien.

Bien que la décision d'élaborer un projet pilote pour les années de transition revienne au conseil scolaire et aux directions d'école impliquées, il n'en demeure pas moins que l'on a tenté d'être à l'écoute des enseignantes et des enseignants. Ces derniers ont pu parler de leurs attentes et aussi de leurs craintes face à cette tentative de changement. En témoignent certains membres du personnel enseignant :

> Beaucoup de liberté dans la façon dont on pouvait voir ça. On s'est assis pis on a structuré un horaire et pis on a été impliqué directement ... On a pu mettre notre mot là-dedans ... ça a été vraiment un projet d'équipe, pis avec une liberté, donc ça nous a permis de travailler le projet vraiment à notre goût, puis, tsé, ça a été positif dans ce sens-là. Ça a pas été imposé.
>
> ... je peux dire... que les personnes qui sont responsables du programme nous en ont souvent parlé, on sait que ça existe...

Int. : ... quand t'es venu ici pour l'entrevue (poste d'enseignant), comment on t'a présenté le projet pilote...?

Rép. : C'était très bien organisé justement, j'ai reçu un appel de monsieur X, qui est le responsable du projet comme tel, lorsque je suis arrivé, on s'est rencontré l'avant-midi et on l'a passé ensemble, il m'a expliqué exactement c'était quoi le projet, c'était quoi ses objectifs et le but comme tel...

Ce n'était donc pas uniquement les membres du personnel enseignant déjà en place au moment de l'annonce qui ont pu bénéficier d'informations sur le projet pilote. On a également partagé les objectifs de ce projet avec le personnel enseignant qui devait commencer à travailler à l'école secondaire du Sud-Ouest au début de l'année scolaire 1990-1991. Au moment de l'embauche, le nouveau personnel a été, en effet, soigneusement choisi pour pouvoir s'intégrer au projet. On leur a expliqué en quoi consistait le projet pilote et quelle serait leur implication à l'intérieur de celui-ci.

Trois des 16 enseignantes et enseignants de l'école secondaire travaillent également au palier élémentaire. En 1990-1991, le spécialiste en arts visuels du secondaire enseignait la musique à l'élémentaire. Le spécialiste en pastorale au secondaire enseignait l'art dramatique aux élèves de 7^e^ et 8^e^ années. Le spécialiste en éducation physique enseignait pour sa part aux deux paliers. Cette année, en 1991-1992, un membre du personnel enseignant enseigne la géographie au secondaire et les sciences à l'élémentaire. Les arts visuels et la musique n'ont pas été enseignés à l'élémentaire par un enseignant du secondaire. Il n'y a pas eu de changement en ce qui concerne les autres matières (pastorale et éducation physique).

Le personnel enseignant a bénéficié d'un certain développement professionnel pendant les deux années du projet pilote :

- Des rencontres avec le personnel enseignant ont été organisées afin de sensibiliser ce dernier au projet des années de transition.
- On a travaillé à développer de nouvelles stratégies d'enseignement en visitant des classes.
- Des journées pédagogiques ont été consacrées à l'intégration de la technologie dans la salle de classe.
- Le personnel a participé à des ateliers sur l'apprentissage coopératif.

- La personne-ressource des années de transition s'est mise à la disposition du personnel enseignant pour lui fournir de l'aide, en salle de classe ou d'une autre façon, quand ce dernier en a fait la demande.

Cependant, il semble, d'après les données recueillies, qu'on ne soit pas allé aussi loin que l'on aurait voulu dans ce domaine. Un des intervenants nous a fait part de sa réflexion sur le sujet :

> Bon... disons qu'ils ont fait de très intéressantes choses, puis ça a été très fort du point de vue de, disons activités supplémentaires, des activités de motivation, des activités d'animation supplémentaires où les jeunes ont l'occasion de goûter à différentes choses, pis de réagir ensemble. Je trouve qu'une place où ça a tendance à manquer... c'est dans les stratégies pédagogiques en général.

Il semble donc que la formation en cours d'emploi ait eu lieu surtout pendant la première année et de façon plutôt ponctuelle. Les activités ont été plus rares lors de la deuxième année du projet. Ce fait est important à retenir, car pour être en mesure d'effectuer des changements durables au niveau des approches pédagogiques par exemple, il est nécessaire, que le personnel enseignant poursuive une réflexion commune à moyen et à long termes sur le sujet. Les approches pédagogiques ne sont ici qu'un exemple. D'autres domaines d'intervention viennent s'ajouter dans la formation en cours d'emploi.

6. Les parents

Le processus de consultation a également impliqué les parents. Ils ont pu, eux aussi, participer à l'élaboration du projet pilote de deux façons. Par le biais des directions d'école, ils ont été informés, au tout début, de l'évolution du dossier et ils ont suivi la rédaction de la soumission au ministère de l'Éducation et de la Formation. Ensuite, on a créé le comité de planification, d'évaluation, de mise en oeuvre et de révision (CPEMR). Ce dernier, composé de parents et d'enseignantes et enseignants, avait pour but d'améliorer les communications entre l'école et la communauté. Comme nous l'ont expliqué les responsables du projet pilote :

> Le but du comité c'est vraiment d'améliorer les communications entre l'école et la communauté, aussi plusieurs gens de la communauté ont été invités à faire partie de ce comité-là.

> Le comité de planification, d'évaluation, de mise en oeuvre et de révision a été placé ensemble le plus tôt possible, même avant de savoir si on l'avait eue [la subvention pour le projet]. On les a mis au courant des possibilités à ce point-là, parce que c'était une soumission et qu'on avait espoir de, de se réaliser, mais moi j'attache énormément d'importance à une communication qui est saine.

Pendant la première année du projet pilote, les membres de ce comité se sont rencontrés sur une base régulière. L'administration a tenu compte de l'opinion des parents dans le processus d'élaboration du projet pilote. Par exemple, au tout début, on contemplait l'idée de regrouper les élèves de l'intermédiaire avec ceux du secondaire. Les parents s'y sont opposés, de même que les élèves du secondaire. Les parents de l'élémentaire ne voulaient pas que leurs enfants, qu'ils jugeaient trop jeunes encore, fréquentent les élèves du secondaire. De son côté, le conseil étudiant du secondaire ne voulait pas avoir les élèves de 7e et 8e années sur une base permanente. On a donc abandonné cette idée.

En plus de la mise en place du CPEMR, on a communiqué (et on communique encore) avec les parents par différents moyens, comme l'explique la directrice de l'école secondaire :

> Nous passons beaucoup de nos annonces dans les bulletins paroissiaux... Euh, encore des affiches dans le village comme tel, nous annonçons beaucoup de nos activités au magasin général, au dépanneur du village, à la banque dans le village. Donc, on a certains endroits qui sont désignés comme des endroits où nos parents et nos élèves peuvent retrouver des informations. La même chose dans les autres villages.

On leur a aussi envoyé, au début du projet pilote, un questionnaire qui portait sur la vision d'une école secondaire francophone pour les adolescentes et les adolescents de la région. Lors de l'entrevue, les parents ont tous été d'accord pour dire que le conseil scolaire avait fait beaucoup d'efforts pour les informer au sujet du projet pilote et pour établir une communication permanente. Diverses réunions ont eu lieu à l'école secondaire, mais aussi dans les paroisses respectives. De plus, les parents se disent satisfaits de ce qui se passe à l'école pour les années de transition. On apprécie le travail qui s'effectue à ce niveau par le conseil scolaire, les directions d'école et le personnel enseignant. On souligne que lorsque les enfants de l'élémentaire arrivent au secondaire, ils sont déjà familiers avec l'espace physique et aussi avec certains membres du personnel enseignant qu'ils ont eu l'occasion de côtoyer précédemment. Comme le mentionne un des parents :

> Ma plus jeune était impliquée dans le programme pour 2 ans. La transition était bien, bien facile, je pense plus facile qu'avant... Les élèves ont eu la chance de venir à l'école... Les profs allaient dans les écoles primaires, ça lui donnait la chance de connaître le prof un peu mieux, pis ça lui donnait une chance d'accepter le français un peu plus.

On est aussi conscient que la mise en marché est importante si l'on veut garder les élèves à l'école de langue française, et que le projet pilote aide beaucoup dans ce sens-là.

7. Les élèves

Les élèves qui fréquentent les écoles de langue française de la région sont des francophones ou des ayants droit selon l'article 23 de la Charte canadienne des droits et libertés, c'est-à-dire, des enfants qui peuvent se prévaloir de l'éducation dans la langue du groupe minoritaire, en autant que ce soit une des deux langues officielles.

De façon générale, les élèves qui fréquentent les écoles de langue française de la région sont, à des degrés différents, influencés par l'anglais à l'extérieur des murs de l'école, que ce soit à la maison ou avec les amies et amis. Bon nombre de ces jeunes vivent, en effet, dans des foyers où l'on ne parle pas le français. Néanmoins, ce sont ces parents, unilingues anglophones ou francophones assimilés, qui veulent que leurs enfants aillent dans une école de langue française.

Les élèves qui ont été interrogés, ceux de l'élémentaire comme du secondaire, ont semblé d'ailleurs attacher une importance toute particulière au fait de pouvoir s'exprimer en français. Un élève de 8^e^ année et une élève de 9^e^ année nous l'ont expliqué en ces termes :

> Et parce que je pense que pour moi, parce que mes grands-parents sont français, et il y a beaucoup de villages qui sont français... Notre province est proche de Québec, alors quand on va à Québec, on peut parler aux gens et on n'a pas peur d'aller quelque part d'autre.
>
> Mes parents voulaient que je garde ma langue française et je trouve que c'est un bon choix de la garder.

Cependant, certains et certaines d'entre eux voient aussi dans le fait d'être bilingue un avantage réel pour leur insertion sur le marché du travail. Ils nous ont expliqué que de savoir le français leur permettrait de décrocher de meilleurs emplois, leur assurant ainsi un meilleur avenir :

> Plus de français comme, ça te donne [une plus grande chance] quand tu vas pour un emploi.
>
> Oui, puis c'est plus bon pour avoir comme un emploi quand tu es plus grand.

Tous les élèves de 9^{e} année qui ont été interrogés ont vanté les mérites de leur école secondaire. Ils donnent l'impression d'être satisfaits des cours qui y sont enseignés et des activités parascolaires. Ils apprécient aussi beaucoup le fait que «tout le monde se connaît». En effet, parce que l'école est petite, il devient alors plus facile de connaître les autres élèves, de même que le personnel enseignant et administratif. Il semble que cela constitue un facteur important pour les élèves. Comme nous l'a expliqué un élève de 9^{e} année :

> Au début, c'était pour moi, je pensais que tout le monde était pour, comme dire, oh t'es juste un jeune puis je peux te pousser autour... c'est pas comme ça, tout le monde est comme une famille dans l'école.

De plus, les élèves que nous avons interrogés sont tous au courant, à quelques exceptions près, de l'existence du projet pilote des années de transition. Cette information provient en général des enseignants et enseignantes des deux paliers, des directions d'école et même du conseil scolaire, en la personne de son représentant, soit le directeur adjoint. On sait par exemple que l'on essaie de faciliter le passage de l'école élémentaire à l'école secondaire en mettant sur pied diverses activités pour les élèves de 7^{e} et 8^{e} années. Ces derniers semblent apprécier ces activités qui leur permettent de se familiariser avec l'école secondaire, apaisant un peu, dans certains cas, les craintes par rapport à leur arrivée en 9^{e} année. Nous avons eu l'occasion lors de la cueillette de données, d'assister à une de ces journées d'activités :

> Donc dans chaque atelier il y a un prof et un, deux ou trois élèves du secondaire qui aident. Par exemple, dans l'atelier vidéo, ce sont les élèves qui parlent de leur expérience de faire un vidéo. Nous nous promenons d'atelier en atelier. Je les trouve tous intéressants. Il n'y a

> pas de différences entre les élèves des trois niveaux et tous les ateliers fonctionnent avec des groupes.
>
> Les élèves ont l'air de vraiment s'amuser, tout en apprenant et en faisant quelque chose. Les grands ont l'air très gentils avec les plus jeunes... (Observations)

La présence de certains enseignants du secondaire à l'élémentaire facilite également la transition pour les élèves de l'élémentaire. Le fait de connaître déjà quelques enseignantes et enseignants lorsqu'ils arrivent en 9e année rend ce passage plus facile.

Les élèves de 9e année, eux, apprécient le fait qu'ils connaissaient déjà l'école secondaire à leur arrivée. Comme l'a mentionné l'un d'entre eux lors de l'entrevue:

> Int. : Comment vous avez aimé ça, les journées de transition l'année dernière?
>
> Rép. : ...on pourrait connaître d'autre monde comme, quand on entrait à l'école, ce serait pas tout nouveau, qu'on serait pas si gêné que ça, parce que c'était gênant les premières journées, mais on connaissait tout le monde, alors...

De plus, l'adjoint au directeur de l'éducation de langue française a rencontré les élèves de façon informelle tout au long du projet. Cette consultation a permis à ces derniers de faire part de leurs commentaires et de leurs suggestions. Comme l'adjoint au directeur l'explique lui-même :

> ... je travaille de très près avec le conseil étudiant qui me soumet ses idées et tout le monde peut faire partie par écrit, par téléphone. Je suis une personne qui est assez visible pour les jeunes, disons visible pendant très peu de temps, mais visible partout, ben presque tout le temps... Ça me donnait la possibilité d'avoir le pouls au jour le jour puis je pense que ça a été très utile...

Comme c'est le cas pour la plupart des autres intervenantes et intervenants, c'est surtout la dimension de la transition des 7e et 8e années et l'importance de poursuivre des études en français qui attirent le plus l'attention des élèves quand ils parlent du projet pilote.

8. Les changements en profondeur : les secteurs de concentration

Le projet pilote, comme il a été mentionné auparavant, a porté sur plusieurs des composantes définies par le ministère de l'Éducation et de la Formation. On se rappelle que l'on a insisté, au moment de l'élaboration du projet pilote, sur l'importance de mettre en oeuvre un projet qui recoupe plusieurs domaines d'intervention, de façon à assurer un changement qui soit aussi significatif que possible. L'impact du changement amorcé au niveau des années de transition devrait donc se mesurer dans plusieurs domaines à la fois.

Au moment de l'élaboration du projet pilote, on pensait à dix secteurs de concentration (ils ont été énumérés à la page 244). La section qui suit brossera un tableau rapide de la mise en oeuvre de ces divers secteurs de concentration. Les trois premiers secteurs ont été développés plus rapidement et plus intensément que les autres. Il en sera tenu compte dans l'analyse descriptive qui suit.

a. Élaborer un programme de base et de stratégies d'enseignement pour les années de transition, répondant aux besoins des apprenantes adolescentes et des apprenants adolescents.

L'école secondaire a mis sur pied un programme à tronc commun dans les domaines du français, de l'anglais et de la religion pour les élèves de 9^{e} année. L'enseignement décloisonné a débuté pendant la première année de mise en oeuvre du projet. Le personnel enseignant a réagi positivement à ce changement, si bien que pendant le deuxième semestre de l'année scolaire 1990-1991 et ce, à la demande de certains membres du personnel enseignant, on a ajouté aux cours à tronc commun aux matières suivantes : les arts visuels, la musique, l'éducation physique et l'histoire. Puis sont venus s'y ajouter les mathématiques et les sciences. À l'heure actuelle, toutes les matières sont enseignées en tronc commun en 9^{e} année.

À la lumière de cette information, il semble donc que le décloisonnement ne représente pas une menace pour le personnel enseignant dans le contexte de cette école secondaire. Le nombre relativement peu élevé d'élèves dans les cours peut expliquer peut-être cette attitude positive face au décloisonnement.

Il est également intéressant de constater que le décloisonnement s'est étendu à toutes les matières et ce, à la demande même du personnel enseignant. Ceci constitue ainsi un autre indice de l'acceptation de la part du personnel enseignan

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de ce changement. Les discussions informelles entre enseignantes et enseignants ont favorisé un grand partage d'information au sujet des stratégies d'enseignement, ce qui les a amenés à vouloir faire partie du décloisonnement. Cette acceptation du changement ne signifie pas, néanmoins, que tous et toutes trouvent ce genre d'enseignement facile. Il est cependant rassurant de constater que tout le personnel enseignant de 9^{e} année est impliqué dans ce processus. On ne semble donc pas craindre, comme nous l'avons remarqué ailleurs dans la province, le fait qu'en septembre 1993 le décloisonnement en 9^{e} année deviendra pratique courante dans les écoles secondaires de l'Ontario.

b. Organiser l'école de façon à favoriser différents regroupements d'élèves.

c. Faciliter la transition des élèves de la 6e à la 7^{e} année, de la 8^{e} à la 9^{e} année et de 9^{e} à la 10^{e} année.

Nous avons choisi de regrouper ces deux composantes car elles se complètent. Ces secteurs de concentration s'adressent essentiellement au regroupement des 7^{e} et 8^{e} années des écoles nourricières dans les locaux de l'école secondaire pour diverses activités, comme par exemple, des ateliers, des leçons dans différentes matières, ainsi que la rencontre des 7^{e} et 8^{e} années avec les élèves de 9^{e} année pour des journées consacrées aux sciences et organisées à l'école secondaire.

D'après les données recueillies, il semble que ce soit l'aspect du projet pilote qui a été le mieux compris par les intervenantes et les intervenants, qu'il s'agisse du personnel enseignant, des parents ou même des élèves. On est conscient, en effet, des efforts qui sont faits pour assurer la continuité au niveau de l'éducation en langue française dans la région, c'est-à-dire, le passage des élèves de l'élémentaire à l'école secondaire de langue française. C'est le secteur de concentration sur lequel on a semblé miser le plus pour assurer le renouveau francophone, qui constitue en fait le but ultime du projet pilote. Comme nous l'ont expliqué plusieurs des intervenantes et des intervenants, il était important d'élaborer un plan de promotion solide pour «vendre» l'école secondaire de langue française en créant de meilleurs liens entre les deux paliers.

d. Offrir au personnel enseignant de nouveaux programmes de formation en cours d'emploi.

C'est pendant la première année de fonctionnement du projet pilote que le personnel enseignant impliqué dans le projet pilote a bénéficié le plus de la formation en cours d'emploi. Nos données indiquent en effet que les enseignantes et les enseignants ont participé à plusieurs rencontres. Par exemple, des séances de perfectionnement professionnel ont été organisées dans le domaine du français, de l'histoire, de la géographie et des sciences, séances qui ont permis un échange à propos des stratégies d'enseignement. Des ateliers ont eu lieu sur l'apprentissage coopératif. Le travail effectué par la personne-ressource pour les années de transition a aussi compté pour beaucoup dans cet aspect de la mise en oeuvre du projet pilote.

Il faut noter, cependant, que les interventions dans le domaine de la formation en cours d'emploi semblent avoir été ponctuelles. Elles ont consisté en des présentations et en des rencontres, lors de journées pédagogiques ou autres. Les données semblent aussi révéler que le travail de perfectionnement s'est fait plutôt pendant la première année d'opération. Moins de rencontres ont eu lieu, bien que la personne-ressource soit demeurée à la disposition du personnel enseignant pendant la deuxième année du projet.

e. Amélioration des techniques d'évaluation des élèves et des méthodes pour rendre compte de leur rendement.

Un certain travail s'est fait dans ce domaine. Des rencontres ont eu lieu avec des spécialistes dans le domaine de l'évaluation. On a insisté sur l'importance d'impliquer les élèves dans le processus d'évaluation. On a amorcé une réflexion sur le sujet. Cependant, ce secteur ne semble pas avoir été prioritaire dans la mise en oeuvre du projet pilote, probablement parce que, dans plus d'un cas, le personnel enseignant en était encore à ses premières armes dans l'apprentissage de nouvelles méthodes pédagogiques et dans l'enseignement de nouvelles matières. Par conséquent, la question de l'évaluation par les élèves devenait, à ce point de la mise en oeuvre, quelque peu secondaire.

f. Amener la communauté à participer au processus de l'éducation, en particulier les parents et les tuteurs.

On a établi un bon système de communication entre l'école et la communauté. Grâce à différents moyens, on a mis en place un réseau d'information qui semble avoir été assez efficace. Les parents ont été impliqués, dès le départ, par leur participation au comité CPEMR. On a aussi rejoint la communauté par le biais d'un sondage sur les besoins en ce qui a trait à l'éducation de langue française dans la région. Enfin, des soirées d'information se sont tenues pendant la durée du projet pilote. Il s'agira de voir comment, dans l'avenir, on concevra l'implication des parents et des tuteurs et tutrices sur une base permanente.

g. Aider les élèves dans leur choix de carrière.

h. Offrir des programmes et des services d'orientation pour la clientèle scolaire et en particulier pour l'enfance en difficulté.

Au niveau des 7^e et 8^e années, la direction de l'école secondaire se rend dans les écoles élémentaires pour parler du palier secondaire avec les élèves, ainsi que pour discuter de leurs choix de cours. Au niveau de la 9^e année, une enseignante est responsable de l'orientation et elle rencontre tous les élèves. Diverses présentations ont aussi été organisées par les universités. On a fourni de l'information sur les carrières qui s'offrent aux jeunes lorsqu'ils entrent sur le marché du travail. Au niveau de l'enfance en difficulté, on a formé une équipe qui s'occupe particulièrement de l'enfance en difficulté, et quelques présentations ont eu lieu sur les habitudes de travail, sur l'estime de soi et sur la violence.

i. Assurer l'équité entre les sexes.

Ce secteur de concentration a été peu touché, selon les informations recueillies lors de nos rencontres avec le personnel des écoles.

j. Offrir des programmes de rattrapage et d'enrichissement.

Ce secteur de concentration a visé l'intégration des élèves. Des clubs ont été mis sur pied, tels que le club de l'annuaire, de l'environnement, de la radio étudiante, etc... afin de fournir aux élèves de l'enrichissement. Peu est ressorti à ce sujet dans les données recueillies.

9. Le processus d'innovation planifiée

Lorsqu'on examine la théorie du changement dans le domaine de l'éducation, on se rend compte que certains éléments vont influencer la réussite d'une innovation scolaire. Michael Fullan (1991) indique certains facteurs ayant un impact sur la réussite d'une mise en oeuvre. Il les décrit en termes de facteurs-clés : le besoin, la clarté, la complexité, la qualité et l'aspect pratique du projet. Il mentionne également le rôle du conseil scolaire, des conseillers et conseillères scolaires et de la communauté, de la direction d'école, et du personnel enseignant. Enfin, il fait aussi référence à des thèmes-clés : une vision d'avenir, une planification flexible, de l'initiative et du contrôle, du développement professionnel et des ressources pour le personnel, une réaction positive aux problèmes et l'idée de la refonte du système scolaire dans son ensemble.

Les facteurs énumérés sont toujours présents dans tout processus de mise en oeuvre. Pour pouvoir parler en termes de réussite, il est souhaitable de tenir compte de ces éléments tout au long d'un projet de changement, afin d'en tirer le maximum.

D'après notre analyse, il semble que le projet pilote étudié réponde avec succès à plusieurs des facteurs-clés et des thèmes-clés cités ci-dessus. Si l'on porte attention aux facteurs-clés, les données recueillies indiquent les résultats suivants:

- En ce qui concerne le ***besoin*** de changement, il apparaît que les diverses parties (administration, personnel enseignant, parents et élèves) sont arrivées assez facilement à un consensus sur la nécessité de motiver les jeunes de 8e année à continuer leurs études en français. Un consensus a aussi été atteint sur l'utilisation d'un projet pilote comme moyen pour entamer un changement en profondeur. Pendant le processus de consultation, l'administration a également réussi à générer un consensus sur les changements à apporter au niveau de l'organisation scolaire, de la programmation, du personnel enseignant et des activités à mettre en place pendant le projet pilote. Tous et toutes ont été d'accord sur la nécessité d'entreprendre un changement et sur les moyens à prendre pour arriver à cette fin.

- En ce qui concerne la ***clarté,*** il semble que la vision qu'on a voulu donner au projet pilote ainsi que ses objectifs et composantes majeures de celui-ci ont été partagés avec les participantes et participants du projet et qu'ils ont été bien compris par ceux-ci, au fur et à mesure de la mise en oeuvre. Ceci est dû, en grande partie, au fait que l'administration centrale a réussi à impliquer tous les groupes concernés dès le début du processus de planification. Ce succès s'explique aussi par le fait qu'une communication active s'est établie entre les groupes au sujet de la vision commune et des directions à prendre dans ce contexte. Cependant, cette clarté tend à s'estomper quelque peu pendant la deuxième année de fonctionnement en ce qui concerne le personnel enseignant, lorsqu'on vient à parler des changements dans les programmes et en ce qui a trait à l'enseignement en salle de classe.

- En ce qui concerne la ***complexité,*** on a insisté sur l'importance de mettre en oeuvre un projet qui recoupe plusieurs domaines d'intervention, même si ces derniers n'ont pas tous été exploités avec la même intensité. L'impact du changement au niveau des années de transition devait se mesurer dans plusieurs domaines à la fois, comme l'a souligné à maintes reprises l'adjoint au directeur de l'éducation en langue française du conseil scolaire. Fullan (1991) arrive à la même conclusion en déclarant qu'un changement complexe, lorsque bien administré, mène souvent à de meilleurs résultats à long terme qu'un changement à petite échelle. Les projets à grande échelle requièrent une plus grande implication de la part des intervenantes et des intervenants et de meilleures ressources. Cependant, la complexité s'avère aussi problématique. Pour cette raison, il est préférable de faire une mise en oeuvre par étapes et non plutôt que d'essayer de tout faire à la fois. Il faut souligner par ailleurs que, dans le projet à l'étude, certains des secteurs de concentration furent moins touchés que d'autres et les intentions ne sont pas claires en ce qui a trait à leur avenir.

- C'est grâce au ***conseil scolaire*** et à son adjoint au directeur de l'éducation en langue française en particulier que ce projet a pris naissance. C'est ce dernier qui a planifié le projet, mais il ne l'a pas fait dans l'isolement. Les intervenantes et intervenants des différents paliers ont été consultés tout au long du processus d'élaboration et leur participation a aidé à élaborer le projet. Pendant la mise en oeuvre, l'adjoint au directeur s'est rendu à maintes reprises dans les écoles afin de voir à sa bonne marche. Le leadership et la volonté de partage dont a fait preuve le représentant de l'administration centrale a grandement contribué au succès du projet.

- En ce qui concerne la ***direction d'école***, il semble que cette dernière ait fourni des appuis pendant toute la durée de la mise en oeuvre du projet. Elle a aidé les enseignantes et les enseignants dans différents domaines, par exemple pour la planification des horaires, comme pour l'organisation de rencontres en vue du développement professionnel. Ce personnel enseignant est, pour la plupart, en début de carrière et réceptif à la notion de changement, de défi et de collaboration entre collègues, en autant qu'on l'encourage à le faire. Nos données montrent que les enseignantes et les enseignants ont bénéficié de cet appui et qu'ils en sont conscients.

Les données recueillies indiquent aussi la présence de certains des thèmes-clés de Fullan (1991) :

- Au sujet de la ***vision d'avenir***, il apparaît que le projet pilote ait été conçu dans une perspective beaucoup plus large que la simple transition des élèves de l'élémentaire au secondaire. On s'est servi du projet afin de développer une vision d'avenir chez les francophones de la région, vision qui dépasse, en fait, le contexte scolaire. C'était, d'une part, l'occasion de consolider un système scolaire au secondaire en insistant sur le renouveau francophone et, d'autre part, d'offrir de meilleurs services au niveau communautaire. Le projet s'insère, en effet, dans un plan d'action à plus long terme dont bénéficiera la population francophone de la région. L'adjoint au directeur a su faire partager cette vision d'avenir avec les intervenantes et les intervenants dans ce dossier et a réussi à les impliquer dans le processus décisionnel.

- Les responsables du projet pilote ont fait preuve de ***flexibilité au niveau de la planification***, en apportant certaines modifications au plan de mise en oeuvre initial. Par exemple, le changement le plus important pendant la deuxième année d'opération est celui de la réduction du nombre d'activités planifiées pour les élèves de 7^{e} et 8^{e} années à l'école secondaire. Ceci a donc contribué à modifier légèrement le plan d'action initial, mais sans pour autant mettre en cause l'existence du projet et de ses objectifs de départ. La flexibilité est donc un concept clé qui ne peut fonctionner avec succès que dans le contexte d'une vision commune.

- En ce qui concerne ***l'initiative et le contrôle des intervenantes et des intervenants***, il apparaît que les enseignantes et les enseignants ont été impliqués dès le début dans le processus de mise en oeuvre du projet pilote. Selon les membres du personnel interrogés, le processus de consultation s'est déroulé de façon démocratique dès le début du projet. Il existe une bonne communication entre le personnel enseignant et la direction. Il semble qu'on ait laissé au personnel enseignant la possibilité de participer à la prise de décision, ou du moins, qu'on ait tenu compte de leurs craintes et aussi de leurs demandes de changement.

- Au niveau du ***développement professionnel***, plusieurs activités ponctuelles de formation en cours d'emploi se sont tenues. Des rencontres ont eu lieu au sujet des méthodes d'évaluation et des stratégies d'enseignement. Cependant, ces activités ont été moins fréquentes pendant la deuxième année de fonctionnement.

Le projet pilote à l'étude semble donc répondre à certains des critères de base énoncés par Michael Fullan, critères qui ont la particularité d'influencer de façon positive la mise en oeuvre d'une innovation quelconque. Un élément, cependant, n'apparaît pas dans la nomenclature de Fullan, c'est celui de l'effectif scolaire. Dans le contexte étudié, il semble important d'en tenir compte. En effet, le projet implique un petit nombre d'élèves et d'enseignantes et enseignants. On note que les échanges entre les individus sont facilités par le fait que tout le monde se connaît, tant chez les élèves que chez les enseignantes et enseignants. Comme on nous l'a mentionné, «on fait partie d'une grande famille». Cet élément revêt, selon nous, une importance particulière dans le présent contexte. Il faut cependant reconnaître que même si la taille de l'école a pu faciliter les choses, le projet pilote ne doit pas sa réussite à ce seul facteur.

10. Implications pour les années de transition.

Les pages qui suivent seront consacrées à une réflexion qui, nous l'espérons, pourra contribuer à faire avancer le débat qui a lieu présentement dans la province sur la refonte du système scolaire et plus spécifiquement sur les années de transition. Cette réflexion portera sur sept éléments qui nous semblent essentiels:

a) Le leadership. L'initiative entreprise pour les années de transition dans la province crée un climat propice pour un changement significatif dans le système scolaire. Le cas de l'école secondaire du Sud-Ouest met en lumière le rôle clé que peut jouer le leadership en assurant que le changement proposé devienne une réalité. Les écrits dans le domaine du changement en éducation mettent l'accent sur la différence qui existe entre leadership et gestion (Louis et Miles, 1991). D'un côté, le leadership est synonyme de direction, encouragement et appui dans le contexte d'une vision commune. La gestion, de l'autre côté, est synonyme de coordination et d'administration, pour assurer que les tâches s'accomplissent. Dans le projet pilote à l'étude, le leadership est venu en grande partie de l'administration centrale, alors que la gestion du projet a été partagée avec les directions d'école. Le leadership peut aussi être associé au personnel enseignant, si on lui fournit l'appui nécessaire. Le leadership s'avère être un facteur-clé dans l'initiative des années de transition.

b) Vision d'avenir et changement. Le cas de l'école secondaire du Sud-Ouest illustre bien comment une vision commune d'un changement dans le domaine de l'éducation peut être une force pour mener au changement. La vision devient en somme le point de départ pour planifier et décider de projets possibles, ainsi que pour se donner des buts communs et pour en évaluer les résultats. La mise en oeuvre des «années de transition» représente plus que la mise en place d'une liste de secteurs de concentration définis par le ministère de l'Éducation et de la Formation. De façon minimale, l'administration et le personnel des écoles devront se donner une vision commune des années de transition afin de pouvoir planifier et mettre en oeuvre des activités coordonnées qui affecteront divers secteurs. Alternativement, comme c'est le cas de l'école secondaire du Sud-Ouest, l'initiative des années de transition pourra contribuer à une vision commune de l'éducation qui sera plus large et qui englobera le système scolaire dans sa totalité ainsi que la communauté. Tout au long des discussions avec le représentant de l'administration central, le concept d'école communautaire est revenu à plusieurs reprises. Pour lui, ce concept représenterait un moyen efficace d'aider la communauté francophone du sud-ouest de l'Ontario à conserver son identité collective, voire même à faciliter son épanouissement.

c) La vision d'avenir, le contrôle et l'appropriation. Le projet pilote de l'école secondaire du Sud-Ouest montre bien le degré d'implication, d'appropriation et de contrôle qui peut se développer suite à la participation du personnel enseignant et de la direction d'école à l'élaboration d'une vision d'avenir dans le but de faire un changement quelconque. Même si au départ, la vision est venue d'un individu, il n'en demeure pas moins qu'il a réussi à impliquer les intervenantes et les intervenants dans l'élaboration du projet. Ces derniers ont pu participer au processus décisionnel et ainsi s'approprier le projet, en contrôlant certains aspects de la mise en oeuvre. Il a réussi également à informer les gens (ceux qui n'étaient pas directement impliqués) des progrès effectués, tout au long du projet. Finalement, il a fait preuve de souplesse en étant capable de modifier certains aspects de la vision originale du projet.

d) La participation des parents et des élèves. Dans les changements qui s'effectuent dans le domaine de l'éducation, on tend souvent à garder les parents à l'écart ou à les considérer comme étant un obstacle de taille à la réalisation du projet. Ils sont rarement impliqués dans le processus décisionnel. Le projet pilote à l'étude présente un scénario différent. Les parents ont été consultés et au tout début du projet, à propos de la vision d'avenir, de la soumission et de la planification de la mise en oeuvre. Les élèves ont aussi été consultés par l'administration centrale. Cet exemple démontre que le partenariat véritable entre l'école et les parents et entre l'école et les élèves ne constitue pas une perte de contrôle ou de pouvoir pour le personnel du milieu scolaire mais favorise plutôt un meilleur dialogue entre les intervenants et intervenantes.

e) La complexité du changement et l'échéancier. L'administration et le personnel enseignant de l'école secondaire du Sud-Ouest ont décidé d'adresser la très grande majorité des secteurs de concentration énoncés par le ministère de l'Éducation et de la Formation pour les années de transition. L'ampluer du projet semble avoir contribué à l'enthousiasme des intervenantes et intervenants, de même qu'à sa réussite initiale. D'un autre côté, il s'est avéré impossible de consacrer la même importance à chacun des secteurs choisis. Dans ce projet, comme dans d'autres, il serait important de définir les priorités et de se donner un échéancier en ce qui a trait à leur mise en oeuvre. Lorsqu'on entreprend tout en même temps, certains secteurs vont inévitablement recevoir moins d'attention plus superficielle et risquent de tomber dans l'oubli.

f) La continuité. Dans le projet de l'école secondaire du Sud-Ouest, on est témoin d'un degré assez élevé d'exploration et d'expérimentation d'une variété de stratégies d'enseignement pendant la première année d'opération. Il apparaît, cependant, qu'il y a eu peu de suivi avec le personnel enseignant pour les aider à maîtriser ces nouvelles méthodes en salle de classe. Mais même avec une aide continue, le succès n'en aurait pas été nécessairement assuré. En effet, les écrits sur ce sujet tendent à démontrer que les appuis fournis au personnel enseignant dans la mise en oeuvre de nouveaux programmes et de nouvelles stratégies d'enseignement ne réussissent pas toujours à rejoindre tous les enseignants et enseignantes impliqués dans ce processus (Fullan, 1991). Pour cette raison, nous pensons qu'il serait préférable de ne pas submerger le personnel enseignant de trop de nouveaux changements en ce qui a trait aux méthodes d'enseignement, mais de limiter plutôt l'intervention dans ce domaine et de miser sur le développement d'appuis solides pour la mise en oeuvre d'un petit nombre de nouvelles stratégies.

g) Le partenariat entre les écoles élémentaires et secondaires. La plupart des innovations dans le domaine scolaire se font dans une seule école. Même lorsqu'elles se font dans plusieurs écoles, ce sont généralement des écoles de même niveau. Le cas de l'école secondaire du Sud-Ouest met en lumière une dimension unique du changement intenté dans les années de transition, celui du partenariat qui s'est développé au cours des deux années d'opération du projet pilote et qui continue de se développer entre le personnel enseignant des 7^{e} et 8^{e} années et celui de la 9^{e} année. Ces formes de partenariat amèneront le personnel administratif et le personnel enseignant de ces écoles, qui possèdent en fait des cultures différentes, à développer de nouvelles relations de travail. Ceci favorisera la création d'une culture des années de transition (Hargreaves, 1986). Le sort des années de transition peut dépendre, en fin de compte, de la qualité de ces nouvelles relations de partenariat entre le personnel des écoles élémentaires et secondaires.

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8.

L'École Secondaire Pagé

par

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Le conseil scolaire où se tenait le projet pilote à l'étude compte 38 écoles élémentaires et 14 écoles secondaires. Parmi celles-ci, sept sont de langue française, dont quatre au secondaire et trois à l'élémentaire, ces dernières étant relativement nouvelles. Ces écoles de langue française rejoignent quatre communautés dans la région. Le projet pilote qui a eu cours dans la section de langue française de ce conseil scolaire public situé dans le nord de l'Ontario regroupait trois écoles secondaires de langue française de même que leurs trois écoles élémentaires nourricières. Le projet a porté sur deux des composantes du ministère de l'Éducation et de la Formation de l'Ontario. Il s'agit des suivantes : organisation scolaire et transitions. Ce fut le seul projet qui s'est tenu dans ce conseil scolaire. Au début, le côté anglophone devait aussi être impliqué dans le projet, mais les conseillers scolaires de la section de langue anglaise s'objectant à créer des familles d'école, la section de langue française décida alors de poursuivre le projet seule.

Comme il est noté dans le compte-rendu de la section de langue française sur la première année d'opération du projet pilote, on visait «une transition planifiée et graduelle d'un enseignement axé sur l'acquisition d'aptitudes au cours des années de formation à un enseignement axé sur l'acquisition de connaissances au cours des années de spécialisation».

Au niveau des 7^e^ et 8^e^ années, le projet a consisté à regrouper ces élèves dans les trois écoles secondaires. On a donc transféré les classes de 7^e^ et 8^e^ années dans les locaux de l'école secondaire. On voulait permettre à ces élèves de s'épanouir dans un milieu scolaire qui ressemble davantage à celui du secondaire, tout en s'assurant que ce dernier soit adapté aux besoins particuliers des jeunes de cet âge. En ce qui concerne les élèves de 9^e^ année, on a décidé de conserver le système de l'élémentaire pour l'enseignement du français et des mathématiques et de ne pas fonctionner sous le système semestriel pour l'enseignement de ces deux matières. Cela signifie donc que ces élèves reçoivent maintenant l'enseignement de ces deux matières pendant toute l'année, à raison de 40 minutes par jour, au lieu de 80 minutes par jour échelonnées sur un semestre. La raison pour ce changement nous a été donnée par le représentant du conseil scolaire :

> Moi j'ai toujours cru... que l'élève de 9^e^ année n'est pas prêt pour pédaler quatre-vingt minutes. Moi, je crois ça personnellement, pis y a

> certains directeurs qui étaient d'accord... et puis y a les gens de l'élémentaire qui sont toutes des directrices, elles croyaient que c'était de même. Que, en effet, l'élève a de la difficulté à faire face au secondaire... pour les langues et les mathématiques, on croit que c'était sensé que l'élève ait un programme continu plutôt qu'à tous les six mois

Cela a ainsi créé un changement moins radical pour les élèves passant de la 8e à la 9e année. Cela a répondu également à certaines inquiétudes de la part des parents et des enseignantes et enseignants. Il est arrivé, en effet, que certains élèves, dans le contexte du système semestriel, restent deux semestres, c'est-à-dire, une année scolaire complète, sans suivre de cours de français ou de mathématiques. Cette philosophie rejoint celle de certaines études qui ont déjà été faites dans ce domaine et qui ont conclu que le français et les mathématiques constituaient deux matières où les élèves obtenaient de meilleurs résultats académiques lorsque ces dernières s'enseignaient sur une base annuelle plutôt que semestrielle (King, 1975; Raphael, Wahlstrom & McLean, 1986).

De plus, on voulait que les élèves des années de transition aient l'occasion de passer plus de temps avec leur titulaire de classe et établir ainsi une meilleure transition entre l'élémentaire et le secondaire. On prévoyait donc près de 75 pour cent de la journée avec le ou la titulaire en 7e année, 50 pour cent de la journée en 8e année, pour arriver finalement à près de 25 pour cent de la journée en 9e année.

Néanmoins, le projet pilote a surtout mis l'accent sur l'organisation scolaire au niveau des 7e et 8e années, dimension qui s'est avérée être la mieux connue des divers intervenants et intervenantes. Il est à noter que, à cause de facteurs indépendants de notre volonté, l'analyse qui suit portera sur une seule des trois écoles secondaires, l'école Pagé, et sur l'école élémentaire de sa juridiction, l'école Marie-Michelle. En effet, une équipe de recherche restreinte et un échéancier plutôt serré ne nous ont pas permis d'étudier la situation dans les trois sites du projet pilote, nous obligeant ainsi à porter notre attention sur une école en particulier.

1. L'école et son milieu

L'école secondaire où se tient le projet pilote analysé est situé dans un centre urbain régional du nord de l'Ontario, où les francophones représentent un peu plus de 30 pour cent de la population. Si l'on regarde le nord de la province dans son ensemble, ce pourcentage diminue à 22 pour cent, ce qui constitue, néanmoins, la plus grande proportion de francophones en Ontario. Il est à noter que le nord connaît, cependant, une baisse de la population francophone due en grande partie aux transferts linguistiques vers l'anglais et à l'émigration. Les secteurs d'activité économique dans cette région sont principalement les mines, les forêts ainsi que le transport. L'industrie des services a modifié le secteur économique de cette région, mais les francophones sont encore en majorité des cols bleus (Ministère des Collèges et Universités, 1989a).

L'école secondaire Pagé possédait un effectif scolaire qui s'élevait à 515 élèves en septembre 1991, incluant les élèves de 7^{e} et 8^{e} années. De ce nombre d'élèves, on en retrouvait 80 (39 filles et 41 garçons) en 7^{e} et 8^{e} années et 41 (15 filles et 26 garçons) en 9^{e} année. Au palier secondaire, les élèves se répartissaient comme suit : 5 pour cent suivaient des cours au niveau fondamental, 45 pour cent au niveau général et 50 pour cent au niveau avancé. Cette clientèle scolaire provenait surtout de la ville même, avec un petit nombre d'élèves habitant les localités environnantes. La plupart de ces jeunes prenaient l'autobus scolaire pour venir à l'école.

Le personnel enseignant (élémentaire et secondaire) regroupe 47 individus, dont trois au palier élémentaire. Le projet pilote a aussi impliqué 13 enseignants et enseignantes du secondaire travaillant directement au palier élémentaire, mais non exclusivement. Les élèves de 7^{e} et 8^{e} années jouissent en effet des services d'enseignantes et d'enseignants du secondaire dans des matières telles que l'éducation physique, les sciences familiales, l'art dramatique, les arts industriels et l'orientation. De leur côté, les élèves de 9^{e} année n'ont, eux, que des enseignantes et des enseignants du palier secondaire.

Pendant la première année du projet pilote, une enseignante de 8^{e} année s'est vue chargée de la gestion du projet. On lui avait accordé, en effet, un peu de temps pour l'administration. La tâche étant en fait trop lourde, l'année suivante on donna la responsabilité des années de transition à la directrice adjointe de l'école secondaire, afin de fournir un appui plus soutenu au personnel enseignant impliqué dans le projet pilote. C'est elle, également, qui a assuré la discipline auprès des élèves de 7^{e} et 8^{e} années.

2. La méthodologie

La cueillette des données s'est effectuée en février 1992. Pour ce faire, deux techniques ont été utilisées : l'entrevue semi-dirigée et l'observation en salle de classe. Ces deux techniques nous ont permis de connaître le point de vue des intervenantes et des intervenants et de mieux comprendre le fonctionnement de l'école et, par le fait même, de mieux comprendre le projet pilote.

Les entrevues ont été réalisées avec les personnes suivantes : les responsables du projet pilote à la section de langue française du conseil scolaire, la direction et direction adjointe de l'école secondaire, la direction de l'école élémentaire nourricière, 11 membres du personnel enseignant travaillant au palier des années de transition (7^{e}, 8^{e} et 9^{e} années), 19 élèves de 7^{e}, 8^{e} et 9^{e} années et finalement, cinq parents d'élèves de l'élémentaire. Les entrevues ont toutes été enregistrées et transcrites par la suite. L'équipe de recherche a également effectué des observations en salle de classe aux niveaux des 7^{e}, 8^{e} et 9^{e} années, afin de vivre la réalité de la salle de classe.

3. L'élaboration et la mise en oeuvre du projet pilote

La mise sur pied du projet pilote vient d'une décision administrative de la part de la section de langue française du conseil scolaire. En effet, dès l'annonce que le ministère de l'Éducation et de la Formation subventionnerait des projets pilotes pour les années de transition, on s'est penché sérieusement sur la question au niveau du conseil scolaire. À cette époque, on manquait de locaux au palier élémentaire. Avec un effectif scolaire à l'élémentaire allant en augmentant, il devenait en effet difficile de trouver l'espace nécessaire pour loger les élèves de la maternelle à la 8^{e} année. Comme l'explique le surintendant de la section de langue française du conseil scolaire :

> ... nous avions considéré les années de transition comme étant un projet qui pourrait nous mener au décloisonnement dans une réorganisation au niveau de la programmation. Mais il faut être honnête, on avait à l'époque un problème de locaux ... on s'est dit, on a un problème d'espace, on a un projet, pourquoi pas marier les deux situations.

La section de langue française a alors rencontré les directions d'école qui allaient être impliquées dans le projet pilote, c'est-à-dire, trois des quatre écoles secondaires et les trois écoles élémentaires pour discuter de la faisabilité du projet. Présenté comme solution au problème de manque d'espace dans les écoles élémentaires, le projet pilote mettait surtout l'accent sur le transfert des élèves de 7^{e} et 8^{e} années au secondaire, même si l'on touchait aussi la cohorte des élèves de 9^{e} année en leur offrant des cours de français et de mathématiques sur une base annuelle.

En ce qui concerne le transfert des élèves, les directions d'école ont d'abord réagi de façon quelque peu négative à cette proposition; ceci était dû en grande partie au fait qu'on ne voulait pas subir de coupures budgétaires dans les écoles élémentaires. Les écoles de langue française ayant une clientèle assez restreinte, on craignait une réduction de services, dans le cas où l'effectif diminuerait. Comme l'a expliqué une des directions d'école à l'élémentaire :

> Qu'est-ce que ça veut dire pour moi, parce que c'est moi qui avait la plus grosse école, puis moi j'avais une bibliothécaire à temps plein, puis moi j'avais une adjointe... si vous sortez mes élèves de 7^{e} et 8^{e}, qu'est-ce qui nous arrive, nous autres?"

Cependant, après maintes discussions, on décida finalement de donner son appui au conseil scolaire. À cause du caractère particulier de chacune des écoles impliquées, il fut décidé que chacune d'entre elles jouirait d'une certaine autonomie locale afin de mieux répondre aux besoins des clientèles respectives.

La section de langue française du conseil scolaire a ensuite informé les parents des élèves de 7^{e} et 8^{e} années de son intention d'effectuer le transfert de leurs enfants à l'école secondaire. Les parents ont réagi très fortement en s'opposant catégoriquement à ce projet. Pour eux, le projet pilote leur était imposé et la consultation qui eut lieu n'en était pas une. Comme nous l'a expliqué un des parents interviewés :

> ... alors automatiquement il y a eu plusieurs réactions négatives parce qu'on n'avait pas trop de détails à ce moment-là, on n'a pas été vraiment impliqués dans la décision, c'était plus ou moins fait avant le temps qu'on a eu la réunion. [La décision] avait été prise à une réunion la veille de la réunion des parents, puis à ce moment-là, on nous a tout simplement informés qu'il y avait le projet des années de transition...

On décida donc d'aller de l'avant avec le projet, même sans l'accord immédiat des parents. De leur côté, les enseignantes et les enseignants reçurent l'information par le biais des directions d'école, une fois la décision prise.

4. Le personnel enseignant

Comme dans le cas des autres intervenantes et intervenants, le personnel enseignant a été informé plutôt que consulté sur la nature du projet pilote qui serait mené dans les écoles de la région. Comme l'explique une enseignante du secondaire appelée à travailler avec les élèves de 7^e^ et 8^e^ années :

> Vraiment on n'a pas eu beaucoup de choses à dire au sujet des changements, on ne nous a pas consultés. On nous a dit que voilà on va entreprendre ce projet là, on vous demande de vous embarquer. Puis parce que c'est un personnel assez professionnel, les gens ont dit OK on va le faire...

La discussion s'est tenue surtout au niveau du transfert d'élèves, ce qui explique pourquoi les enseignantes et les enseignants semblent associer le projet pilote des années de transition en grande partie aux 7^{e} et 8^{e} années. Le deuxième volet du projet pilote, qui a trait à la transition des élèves de l'élémentaire au secondaire ne semble pas être aussi reconnu par le personnel enseignant en général. Pendant la cueillette de données, nous nous sommes rendu compte que les enseignantes et enseignants en 9^{e} année, qui ne sont pas impliqués avec les élèves de l'élémentaire, ne semblaient pas très concernés par le projet pilote. Même pour ceux et celles qui enseignent aux élèves de 9^{e} année les mathématiques et le français, les deux matières non semestrées, la situation a semblé présenter également une certaine ambiguïté. On comprenait difficilement, en effet, notre présence, à titre d'observatrices, dans les salles de classe, comme le souligne l'événement suivant :

> Lorsque je [l'observatrice] suis arrivée dans la classe, je suis allée au bureau de l'enseignante pour me présenter. Elle m'a dit ne pas être au courant que j'allais faire de l'observation dans sa classe.
>
> Je lui ai alors demandé si la direction lui en avait parlé. Elle m'a dit que non, que la seule chose qu'elle ait reçue était une note expliquant que nous étions à l'école pour les «années de transition» et non pas pour les 9^{e} années.

Un enseignant de 9e année fit la remarque suivante :

> On les appelle encore les 9e années chez nous, on sait que ça fait partie des années de transition, mais quand on m'a dit qu'on va interviewer les professeurs des années de transition, je pensais qu'on allait pas m'interviewer

D'après la réaction de cette enseignante et de cet enseignant il semble qu'on associe le projet pilote des années de transition plus aux 7e et 8e années, qu'à la 9e année. D'autres témoignages d'enseignantes et d'enseignants oeuvrant en 9e année vont aussi dans ce sens. On est conscient que les mathématiques et le français sont enseignés sur une base annuelle, mais on ne semble pas faire le lien entre cette nouvelle organisation et le projet pilote des années de transition.

Comment peut-on expliquer cette réaction de la part du personnel enseignant? Nous avons soulevé la question avec la direction d'école et la direction adjointe. On admet que peu a été fait par rapport à la 9e année dans le plan de mise en oeuvre, ceci résultant en grande partie du manque de temps, mais aussi du manque de directives du ministère de l'Éducation et de la Formation en ce qui a trait au décloisonnement.

> ... il faut dire qu'au niveau de la 9e année, on n'a pas fait beaucoup OK, d'abord parce qu'on n'était pas prêt, deuxièmement, parce qu'on attendait et on attend toujours des directives précises du ministère de l'Éducation, à savoir la question du décloisonnement, la question d'abolition des niveaux de difficulté, l'abolition des crédits
>
> Euh, comme j'ai mentionné, la première année on a concentré sur les 7e et 8e, cette année nous avons mis en place plusieurs choses au niveau de 9e année, mais on n'approche pas les professeurs trop vite non plus, c'est beaucoup de les faire changer, il y en a qui sont ici depuis longtemps ils sont dans l'enseignement depuis longtemps, il faut les encourager sans les frustrer

Comme cela fait partie d'un processus de longue haleine, les élèves de 9e année ne sont donc pas touchés immédiatement par ce changement. Mais surtout, le décloisonnement entraîne une modification plus importante au niveau des styles d'enseignement et de la philosophie de l'éducation. Par conséquent, cette question est devenue un sujet controversé pour les enseignantes et les enseignants. Cela peut expliquer, dans le contexte actuel, le fait que moins d'efforts aient été entrepris par la direction d'école et par le personnel administratif de la section de langue française du conseil scolaire pour poursuivre leur objectif en ce qui a trait aux élèves de 9^e année.

Pour les raisons énoncées plus haut, la question du décloisonnement est devenue le sujet de l'heure pour les enseignantes et les enseignants qui ont été interrogés. On ne semble pas savoir à quoi s'attendre et cela provoque de l'insécurité parmi le personnel enseignant. Au moment des entrevues, on attendait toujours des directives claires de la part du ministère de l'Éducation et de la Formation sur cette question. Enfin, pour un grand nombre de ces enseignantes et enseignants, la décision ministérielle de décloisonner en 9^e année est perçue plutôt comme une décision politique qui a été prise à Toronto et qui ne tient pas nécessairement compte de la réalité des divers milieux scolaires de la province.

C'est donc sur le transfert des élèves de 7^e et 8^e années qu'on a insisté. Lorsque la décision fut prise par les directions d'école d'effectuer ce changement, on leur a remis la responsabilité d'en informer le personnel enseignant. C'est en février 1990 que les enseignantes et les enseignants se sont vu présenter le projet des années de transition. On leur fit alors part que d'autres soirées d'information et de consultation auraient lieu et qu'ils pourraient y participer à titre d'enseignantes et enseignants, de parents ou de contribuables. Les directions d'école se sont ensuite réunies avec les associations professionnelles d'enseignantes et d'enseignants et les conseillers et conseillères scolaires. Une entente de principe a alors été établie qui assurait le respect des ententes collectives des différents paliers. Néanmoins, à cause d'un échéancier serré, il fut difficile d'aller très loin au niveau de la consultation et le projet pilote fut mis de l'avant. Cette décision amena beaucoup de discussions au sein du personnel enseignant, tant à l'élémentaire qu'au secondaire.

Pour ceux et celles de l'élémentaire, le transfert signifiait un nouveau milieu de travail, de nouveaux collègues, une ambiance différente et des ressources accrues. De plus, le personnel enseignant de l'élémentaire a dû rédiger une demande formelle pour l'obtention des postes. Les candidates et candidats ont été sélectionnés lors d'entrevues. Le personnel enseignant n'a pas été automatiquement relocalisé à l'école secondaire. Aucun problème ne s'est cependant posé et le transfert s'est effectué sans heurt.

Au niveau du secondaire, le personnel enseignant a aussi montré certaines inquiétudes. Par exemple, on ne voulait pas perdre des locaux à cause de la venue des élèves de l'élémentaire dans les murs du secondaire. Certains de ceux et celles qui ont été amenés à travailler avec les élèves de l'élémentaire ont aussi déploré le fait qu'il n'y ait pas eu de formation en cours d'emploi pour les aider à travailler avec ces groupes d'âge. Comme l'explique la direction adjointe :

> Je pense qu'on pourrait faire encore plus que ça. Cela va être, je pense, la critique de notre programme, que peut-être on aurait dû fournir un petit peu plus d'aide aux professeurs en termes de stratégies, puis de faire connaître ce que sont les élèves, quelle sorte de besoins ils ont, qu'ils sont différents de ceux du secondaire

Une enseignante qui travaille maintenant avec les élèves de 7^{e} et 8^{e} années en sciences familiales abonde aussi dans ce sens :

> Il aurait fallu une formation de personne, surtout au niveau de quoi s'attendre en termes des enfants de cet âge... c'est totalement différent avec des petits enfants comme – ça, j'ai trouvé ça extrêmement difficile...

En ce qui concerne les relations de travail entre le personnel enseignant de l'élémentaire et celui du secondaire, il semble qu'il n'y ait pas eu de problèmes d'adaptation. En fait, le personnel enseignant de l'élémentaire semble avoir certains avantages qu'il n'avait pas à l'autre école :

> J'ai du matériel comme j'en veux... j'ai tout ce que je veux en sciences, je le demande, je l'ai OK, alors pour moi c'est un gros avantage, la bibliothèque également

Pour ceux et celles du secondaire, la venue de leurs collègues du palier élémentaire n'a pas amené de changements majeurs. Au contraire, certains et certaines d'entre eux disent bénéficier de leur présence dans l'école.

5. Les parents

Le groupe des parents est celui qui a le plus fortement réagi à la décision du conseil scolaire. D'une part, il était contre le projet pilote. Les craintes se rapportaient surtout au danger que pouvait représenter l'école secondaire pour des jeunes de l'élémentaire, à cause de la grande différence d'âge entre les élèves de 7^{e} année, par exemple, et ceux et celles de 11^{e} ou de 12^{e} année et de l'influence que pouvaient avoir les plus âgés sur les plus jeunes. On craignait que les 7e et 8e années soient entraînés à tenter des expériences qui ne correspondraient pas à celles de leur âge.

D'autre part, on s'est élevé contre le fait que lorsque les rencontres avec les parents ont débuté la décision de mettre de l'avant le projet avait déjà été prise par le conseil scolaire. On ne consultait pas les parents, on les informait ni plus ni moins d'un fait accompli.

> ... à ce moment-là, notre fille était à l'école Marie-Michelle et puis on a soudainement reçu une lettre de Madame la directrice qu'il y avait une réunion et un peu le sujet de la réunion, alors on a eu un peu comme une brique sur la tête, alors automatiquement plusieurs réactions ont été négatives, parce qu'on n'avait pas trop de détails à ce moment-là. Alors on n'a pas été impliqués vraiment dans la décision, c'était plus ou moins fait avant le temps qu'on a eu la réunion.

Les parents de l'école élémentaire se sont alors regroupés et ont tenté d'arrêter le projet. Des pétitions ont été signées, des articles ont été publiés dans les journaux locaux et des manifestations ont eu lieu. Le conseil scolaire ne voulait pas revenir sur sa décision et il répondit aux craintes des parents en les assurant qu'il mettrait en place un système où les élèves de l'élémentaire ne seraient pas trop en contact avec ceux du secondaire. Les locaux des 7e et 8e se trouveraient sur un étage séparé; les élèves de l'élémentaire continueraient de prendre les mêmes autobus scolaires; leur horaire serait différent de celui du secondaire; ils utiliseraient la cafétéria à des heures différentes du reste des élèves. On aurait donc «une école dans une école». Les responsables du projet pilote, en particulier la direction de l'école secondaire, ont alors fait tout en leur pouvoir pour mettre en place un système qui réponde le plus adéquatement possible aux attentes des parents, mais aussi du personnel enseignant.

6. Le rôle de la direction de l'école secondaire Pagé

Bien que le projet pilote ait été plus ou moins imposé par le conseil scolaire, la direction d'école admet que l'on a écouté les critiques et qu'on a permis de mettre en place des stratégies pour que le projet fonctionne aussi bien que possible.

> ... les parents avaient vraiment peur que les jeunes, surtout les jeunes filles de 11, 12 ans subiraient l'influence des garçons de 15 à 17 ans, l'influence qu'il y a dans toutes les écoles... la cigarette, les drogues, les élèves qui ont des problèmes de comportement, les élèves qui sont en

> trouble avec la police, alors il fallait créer des structures qui nous permettaient de répondre aux questions des parents et aussi d'être capable de fournir un programme qui répondait vraiment aux besoins des élèves...

Au niveau de la mise en oeuvre du projet pilote, la responsabilité a été remise en grande partie à la direction d'école du secondaire. Bénéficiant de la subvention du ministère de l'Éducation et de la Formation, on a pu mettre en place une structure qui favorise le changement. La direction s'est alors donné le mandat de monter une équipe de travail qui mènerait à bien le projet et de favoriser le bon fonctionnement de l'école. On voulait faciliter la transition de l'élémentaire au secondaire au point de vue administratif et budgétaire, au niveau des locaux, du personnel enseignant et de la liaison entre l'école élémentaire et l'école secondaire. Ce changement s'est fait avec en tête le souci de créer le moins de problèmes possibles tant pour le personnel enseignant que pour les élèves et leurs parents. On a donc décidé de se mettre à l'écoute des intervenantes et intervenants.

Pendant la première année de fonctionnement du projet pilote, il s'est avéré qu'on a éprouvé certaines difficultés au niveau de l'administration du projet, à cause de la trop lourde charge de travail causée par sa mise en oeuvre. La direction a donc décidé de changer son fonctionnement pendant la deuxième année, en donnant la responsabilité administrative du projet à la direction adjointe et en assurant ainsi une meilleure communication entre les divers intervenants et intervenantes dans ce dossier.

> Au début, c'était plutôt la direction qui faisait les décisions, mettre en place l'équipe que nous avons... en termes de coordination pour le programme l'année passée on avait un professeur qui avait 40 minutes par jour, puis on a vite réalisé que c'est vraiment pas assez, alors ça fait partie de mes tâches (direction adjointe) cette année la coordination de programmes. Ça nous prend des réunions et ça prend un travail d'équipe et notre but cette année c'est de bâtir l'équipe pour leur permettre plus de décisions, plus d'interactions, pour que le programme ça vienne vraiment d'eux et non pas imposé par l'administration.

Le travail de la directrice adjointe semble avoir été grandement apprécié par les enseignantes et les enseignants impliqués dans le projet pilote. Les témoignages recueillis indiquent que les efforts entrepris par la direction d'école pour tenir compte des préoccupations de chaque groupe d'intervenants et d'intervenantes ont porté fruit. En effet, dans l'ensemble, on reconnaît la valeur du projet pilote au niveau des 7^{e} et 8^{e} années. D'après les témoignages recueillis, les parents, comme le personnel enseignant, admettent que le changement a été positif pour les élèves. Plus de possibilités s'offrent à eux. L'accès au gymnase, aux laboratoires, à la bibliothèque n'en constituent que quelques exemples.

7. Les élèves

Les élèves de 7^{e} et 8^{e} années, dans l'ensemble, réagissent très bien au fait de se retrouver à l'école secondaire. Ils apprécient le fait qu'on les traite différemment qu'à l'école élémentaire, que les règlements au secondaire sont moins enfantins. Ils se sentent plus prêts à entreprendre le secondaire. Comme en témoignent les élèves que nous avons interrogés :

> ... ça nous prépare beaucoup parce que, comme si on était encore à Marie-Michelle, on n'aurait pas des différents profs, puis là en arrivant en 9^{e} année, on aurait comme trouvé ça plus difficile.
>
> On a plus de privilèges... on fait bien plus qu'à d'autres écoles, alors moi, j'aime ça
>
> Maintenant, on est plus comme les secondaires, parce qu'on fait plus d'affaires comme eux autres, je pense

En plus de sa clientèle scolaire provenant du système public, l'école secondaire Pagé reçoit aussi des élèves du secteur catholique. Ces derniers, pour diverses raisons, ont décidé de transférer au système public. À l'élémentaire, par exemple, certains parents ont entendu parler du projet pilote et viennent y inscrire leurs enfants en 7^{e} ou en 8^{e} année. Dans le cas des élèves qui s'inscrivent en 9^{e} année, plusieurs d'entre eux éprouvaient certaines difficultés à l'école. Ils viennent à l'école secondaire Pagé car celle-ci a la réputation d'offrir de bons services pour les élèves identifiés comme ayant des difficultés d'apprentissage ou des problèmes de comportement. Comme le travail s'est surtout fait au niveau des 7^{e} et 8^{e} années et que la 9^{e} année n'a pas encore été vraiment restructurée, la question des deux sortes de clientèle devra être étudiée dans un avenir assez proche : l'école secondaire Pagé fera ainsi face à deux réalités différentes. En effet, comment assurer l'intégration des élèves de 9^{e} année qui débutent leur secondaire et viennent du secteur catholique, au même titre que ceux et celles qui fréquentent déjà Pagé? Ces préoccupations font partie des discussions au sujet de l'avenir du projet pilote.

Les élèves en 9^{e} année semblent, pour leur part, moins satisfaits du projet pilote des années de transition. Ils ne sentent pas faire partie des années de transition. À ce sujet, deux élèves nous ont tenu ces propos :

> Moi je ne savais pas jusqu'au milieu du premier semestre, t'sais quand ils ont mis une affiche qui disait année de transition 7^{e} à 9^{e}. Je savais pas que j'étais en transition.
>
> ... si on était vraiment dans les années de transition, on pourrait leur parler aux 7 et 8 vraiment... on est traité plus en secondaire. Comme ils vont mettre une annonce, ils vont dire que tous les élèves du secondaire ça veut dire des 9 à 12, pas des 7 et 8. Tu sais, on est plus inclus avec les secondaires... on n'est pas inclus avec les 7 et 8 du tout

Il est donc intéressant de constater qu'une différence existe entre les deux cohortes d'élèves en ce qui a trait à leurs places respectives dans l'école. On semble se satisfaire, au niveau des 7^{e} et 8^{e} années, d'être ni plus ni moins «une école dans une école», car on goûte quand même, bien que de façon indirecte, aux avantages du secondaire.

Les élèves de l'élémentaire ont accès à des laboratoires de sciences et d'informatique. Grâce à la collaboration entre leurs enseignantes et enseignants, ils participent à de multiples activités scolaires (la création d'une pièce de théâtre) et parascolaires (danses et activités sociales multiples, clubs, etc.) ce qui leur donne un sens d'appartenance à la communauté scolaire. Au début de l'année scolaire, tous et toutes ont participé à des ateliers sur l'estime de soi qui leur ont permis de mieux se connaître et s'apprécier, tout en prenant contact avec des élèves du secondaire. En effet, ces derniers ont agi à titre de moniteurs et de monitrices. Donc, les élèves des trois classes de l'élémentaire ont été très liés dès le départ et forment un groupe homogène qui possède sa propre culture.

De leur côté, les élèves de 9^{e} année semblent déplorer le fait qu'ils n'ont aucun contact avec les jeunes de l'élémentaire et que, finalement, on ne tienne pas compte du fait qu'eux aussi font partie des années de transition. On peut tenter d'expliquer l'insatisfaction des élèves de 9^{e} année par rapport à leur «absence» des années de transition de deux façons :

Premièrement, à l'intérieur du projet pilote on a mis l'accent surtout sur la cohorte des élèves de l'élémentaire et sur leur transfert de l'élémentaire à l'école

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secondaire ce qui, en somme, a laissé peu de place à un plan d'action bien structuré pour les élèves de 9^{e} année.

Deuxièmement, et ceci découle de la première raison, ces élèves n'arrivent pas à se considérer comme faisant partie d'une cohorte particulière d'individus, à cause du manque d'encadrement qu'ils reçoivent de la direction et du personnel enseignant, ainsi que du manque de lien avec leurs pairs de l'élémentaire. Plusieurs d'entre eux ne savent même pas qu'ils participent au projet pilote. Il s'avère donc difficile pour eux de se considérer appartenir aux années de transition.

8. Les changements en profondeur : les secteurs de concentration

1. *"Valoriser l'élève de cet âge en le plaçant physiquement dans un milieu qui, au niveau des ressources humaines et physiques, ressemble davantage à celui du secondaire tout en étant modifié pour ses besoins particuliers".*

Le changement en profondeur le plus évident dans la section de langue française de ce conseil scolaire est celui de l'organisation scolaire, soit le transfert des élèves de l'élémentaire à l'école secondaire. C'est cet aspect du projet pilote qui a nécessité le plus d'énergie et qui a provoqué le plus de réactions, tant positives que négatives. En général, on a d'abord réagi négativement à l'annonce du projet pilote, alors que pendant la deuxième année d'opération, on a vu d'un oeil plus positif le transfert des élèves. Ce volet du projet pilote représente, pour bien des gens, le «projet pilote des années de transition». Il est le plus connu et il a fait couler beaucoup d'encre dans la presse locale. C'est aussi la composante sur laquelle le conseil scolaire a misée le plus. Le transfert des élèves s'est effectué au tout début du projet pilote, c'est-à-dire, en septembre 1990. Comme on l'a expliqué auparavant, ce changement s'est avéré une solution à un problème particulier, soit celui du manque de locaux à l'élémentaire. Malgré un départ difficile, il semble que, dans l'ensemble, ce volet du projet pilote a, en fin de compte, assez bien réussi, d'après les témoignages recueillis.

Les observations effectuées en salle de classe témoignent de l'atmosphère que l'on retrouve chez les 7^{e} et 8^{e} années, atmosphère qui favorise la transition entre l'élémentaire et le secondaire. Les élèves ont accès à plus de ressources, possèdent une certaine autonomie dans la création de projets et détiennent des responsabilités dans des clubs tels que celui de la levée de fonds, par exemple. Il faut ajouter que la relation qui existe entre le professeur titulaire et les élèves semble en être une de qualité. Finalement, on se sert aussi des techniques pédagogiques de l'apprentissage coopératif afin de développer des habitudes de travail dont ils auront besoin au secondaire.

Le projet pilote, cependant, ne devait pas se limiter uniquement au transfert des élèves de l'élémentaire. Les élèves de 9^e^ année en faisaient aussi partie. On avait projeté d'établir, au tout début du projet pilote, un groupe homogène avec les élèves de 7^{e}, 8^{e} et 9^{e} années. La réalité nous montre que l'on semble s'être peu occupé de la 9^{e} année dans la mise en oeuvre du projet pilote. Même si dans le compte rendu de la première année on note que «l'établissement d'un groupe homogène (7^{e}, 8^{e} et 9^{e}) s'est fait graduellement au cours de l'année scolaire 1990-1991», la réalité semble être quelque peu différente. En effet, il semble que les élèves de 9^{e} année, bien que faisant partie, en principe, des années de transition, sont peu en contact avec les élèves de 7^{e} et 8^{e} années et sont plutôt associés avec le secondaire.

On peut peut-être en expliquer la raison par le fait que ce projet est relativement jeune et que sa mise en oeuvre est encore à ses tous débuts. Il se pourrait fort bien que ce changement puisse se réaliser à moyen ou à long terme. Cela, par ailleurs, dépendra de la perception que l'on se fait du processus de changement amorcé. Est-ce que ce changement est supposé s'être terminé avec la fin du projet pilote, c'est-à-dire, en juin 1992? Ou est-ce qu'on continuera la mise en oeuvre dans les années qui viennent? Si tel est le cas, il semblerait raisonnable de penser que les élèves de 9^{e} année rejoindront les élèves de 7^{e} et 8^{e} années et qu'ils formeront éventuellement un groupe homogène. Seul l'avenir, dans le contexte actuel, saura répondre à cette question.

2. ***«Faciliter la transition des élèves en accentuant le concept de la famille d'écoles par l'entremise de visites et d'échanges réguliers. Utiliser une équipe des mêmes enseignantes et enseignants pour les 7^{e}, 8^{e} et 9^{e} années».***

Cet objectif fait partie du secteur de concentration «transitions». D'après l'analyse de données effectuée, cette composante a été moins bien traitée. Si on se fie aux témoignages recueillis, il semble qu'à part le fait que certains enseignants et enseignantes sont impliqués aux deux paliers d'études, peu a été accompli concrètement concernant la transition, mises à part quelques activités conjointes avec les 7^{e} et 8^{e} années et les 9^{e} années des trois écoles secondaires, par exemple, des pièces de théâtre.

Mentionnons, cependant, un facteur qui échappe à l'analyse. La directrice adjointe de l'école secondaire parle, en effet, de la tenue régulière de réunions pour le personnel enseignant qui oeuvre en 7^e et 8^e années. Par ailleurs, parmi le personnel enseignant interrogé, une seule personne fait référence à ces rencontres, pour nous dire qu'elle n'y assiste pas à cause de son horaire trop chargé. Le manque d'information ne nous permet pas, ici, de conclure sur la valeur de cette forme d'appui. Cependant, il est important de souligner que de tels échanges entre les enseignantes et les enseignantes ont le potentiel de mener à un changement de substance et possèdent une valeur certaine au plan pédagogique. Il n'est donc pas clair, dans le contexte actuel, si cette intervention a produit des résultats positifs. Ce qui est d'autant plus intéressant, c'est que très peu de personnes ont mentionné ces réunions, alors que celles-ci auraient pu être un outil de changement très puissant.

Pour le personnel enseignant de 9^e année qui travaille aussi au palier élémentaire, certains besoins au niveau de la formation en cours d'emploi se sont faits sentir. On a voulu créer un climat propice aux échanges entre le personnel enseignant des deux paliers, de même qu'entre le personnel enseignant des familles d'école. Mais on admet qu'il s'est avéré difficile d'aller très loin dans ce sens.

Comme il a été mentionné auparavant, il apparaît qu'on n'ait pas fourni assez d'appui au personnel enseignant en ce qui a trait aux stratégies d'enseignement et aux tâches requises. D'ailleurs, dans le rapport d'évaluation de la deuxième année de fonctionnement du projet pilote, le comité recommande «que des activités de perfectionnement pédagogique axées sur les stratégies d'enseignement soient organisées», pour les années à venir.

9. Le processus d'innovation planifiée

Tout changement dans le domaine de l'éducation est un processus complexe qui comporte une dimension structurelle et pédagogique, mais aussi une dimension sociale pour ses intervenants et intervenantes (directions d'école, personnel enseignant, parents et élèves). C'est pourquoi le contexte dans lequel s'effectue la mise en oeuvre d'un projet va grandement en influencer le résultat. En effet, toute mise en oeuvre n'est pas automatiquement couronnée de succès et divers éléments peuvent l'influencer. La présence de ces éléments, que Fullan (1991) décrit en termes de thèmes clés , peut prédire le succès d'une innovation. Ils sont au nombre de six : une vision d'avenir, une planification flexible, un partage des pouvoirs, un plan de développement professionnel, une réaction positive aux problèmes qui se présentent et finalement une refonte («restructuring») du système scolaire.

Dans le cas du projet pilote à l'étude, il semble raisonnable de dire que la composante du transfert des élèves de 7^{e} et 8^{e} années au secondaire, malgré un départ pour le moins mouvementé, semble, à présent, être reconnue comme étant une réussite. En effet, sur le plan administratif, le premier objectif du projet pilote a été atteint. Le milieu de vie des élèves de 7^{e} et 8^{e} années est maintenant plus proche de celui du secondaire. Tout s'est fait tel que prévu dans le plan d'action du conseil scolaire. Les élèves, ainsi que leurs parents, ont l'air satisfait du résultat. Selon la direction d'école et le conseil scolaire, la présence des élèves de 7^{e} et 8^{e} années au secondaire constitue un changement de structure permanent. On a donc pris pour acquis dans la région que, dans le système public, les élèves de 7^{e} et 8^{e} années seront dorénavant intégrés à ceux du secondaire, du moins au niveau de l'espace physique.

En ce qui a trait aux autres dimensions du projet pilote, cependant, des questions se posent. Il semble opportun de retourner pour l'instant à certains des thèmes clés de Fullan (1991) et de démontrer que ces éléments ne sont peut-être pas aussi présents qu'ils devraient l'être dans le contexte du projet pilote à l'étude et que, par conséquent, il s'avère difficile de dire si le changement est permanent ou si, à moyen et à long terme, on reviendra aux pratiques existant avant la refonte au niveau des années de transition.

Le projet pilote, à l'exception de la composante du transfert des élèves, ne possède pas, à ce moment-ci de la mise en oeuvre, une vision d'avenir. Une vision d'avenir englobe en effet deux dimensions : d'abord, celle qui représente la vision commune que partage l'administration et le personnel enseignant de ce que l'école pourrait devenir dans le contexte du changement proposé, et ensuite la vision commune en ce qui a trait au processus de changement à développer pour arriver à mettre sur pied cette «nouvelle école». Il s'avère essentiel que cette vision soit partagée par celles et ceux participant à l'innovation. Dans le cas qui nous intéresse ici, il semble que le projet réponde à un besoin particulier, celui du manque de locaux, tout en faisant preuve d'une certaine volonté d'innover en ce qui concerne les élèves de 7^{e} et 8^{e} années, plutôt qu'à une vision d'ensemble au niveau de la refonte des années de transition sur le plan pédagogique.

Le partage des pouvoirs et des responsabilités constitue aussi un élément important dans la mise en oeuvre d'une innovation réussie dans le domaine des programmes et des méthodes d'enseignement. On doit en effet amener les participantes et les participants à s'impliquer au niveau de la prise de décision et, spécialement, au niveau de la résolution de problèmes. Ces derniers n'agissent donc pas uniquement au seul titre d'exécutantes et d'exécutants. Dans le projet pilote à l'étude, il semble qu'une certaine confusion règne en ce qui concerne la teneur du projet, étant donné que les enseignantes et enseignants impliqués dans l'initiative n'ont pas été en mesure de s'approprier le projet, de le prendre en charge.

Le développement professionnel représente aussi un thème central dans la théorie du changement. Pour être en mesure d'arriver à un changement durable, on doit fournir au personnel enseignant les moyens de pouvoir, de façon efficace, mettre en oeuvre ce changement. On doit donc lui fournir, pour ce faire, des outils d'intervention. On a vu, tout au long de notre analyse, que l'on ne semble pas être allé aussi loin qu'on l'aurait voulu dans ce domaine. Selon la direction adjointe, on devait miser sur l'échange entre le personnel enseignant de l'élémentaire et celui du secondaire et sur la révision des méthodes d'enseignement. Cet échange s'est fait de façon informelle et ponctuelle, pour résoudre des problèmes de ressources plutôt que des problèmes de stratégies d'enseignement comme tels. Sur ce dernier point, plusieurs enseignantes et enseignants nous ont d'ailleurs fait part de leur questionnement face aux différentes stratégies qu'ils pensaient devoir utiliser (apprentissage coopératif, enseignement individualisé, centres d'intérêt, etc...) Il semble donc que ce dernier objectif n'ait pas été tout à fait atteint et que le personnel enseignant se trouve encore aux prises avec des difficultés nécessitant plus de mesures d'appui de la part de la direction d'école.

Nous venons de décrire seulement trois des thèmes clés décrits par Fullan. Selon nous, cependant, ce sont des éléments essentiels que nous devons retrouver dans le contexte d'un changement efficace. Notre analyse semble démontrer un manque de compréhension, d'explication et de concertation entre les intervenantes et les intervenants sur le *pourquoi d'un changement* au niveau des années de transition, sur *ce qu'il faut changer* et enfin, sur *comment effectuer ce changement*. Si ces trois éléments étaient mieux compris de la part des intervenantes et des intervenants, ces derniers pourraient assumer un meilleur contrôle et faire preuve d'une plus grande initiative à l'intérieur du projet pilote. En d'autres mots, il y aurait un plus grand degré d'appropriation du projet par les individus impliqués dans sa mise en oeuvre.

10. Implications pour les années de transition

L'analyse qui vient d'être effectuée possède des implications théoriques par rapport au processus de changement que l'on a entamé dans la province en ce qui a trait aux années de transition. Les pages qui suivent se veulent donc un outil de réflexion pouvant aider les intervenantes et les intervenants du système scolaire à mieux composer avec cette nouvelle réalité organisationnelle que constitue les années de transition.

Si nous faisons un retour sur les thèmes clés qui ont été présentés antérieurement, il s'avère utile de tirer des conclusions qui dépassent le contexte particulier du projet pilote étudié en adressant certaines questions de fond.

Nous porterons notre attention sur cinq points en particulier:

a) **Le conflit entre deux cultures chez le personnel enseignant.** C'est une tâche délicate que d'amener le personnel enseignant de l'élémentaire et du secondaire à travailler ensemble sous un même toit avec un groupe d'élèves qui jusqu'à tout récemment se retrouvaient à deux niveaux différents dans le système scolaire ontarien. Andy Hargreaves (1986), dans une étude effectuée en Angleterre, a documenté avec succès les difficultés éprouvées par des enseignantes et des enseignants de l'élémentaire et du secondaire à mettre sur pied les écoles intermédiaires («middle schools»). Le personnel enseignant étudié appartenait en effet à deux cultures différentes, voire dans certains cas, contradictoires : le niveau élémentaire qui préconise plutôt une approche généraliste face à l'enseignement, alors que le secondaire insiste sur la spécialisation par matière.

Ce conflit entre deux cultures ne se limite pas au cas de l'Angleterre. Des situations semblables existent ailleurs dans le monde, comme dans le cas de l'Ontario par exemple, ce que nous avons tenté d'illustrer dans l'étude de cas présentée. Idéalement, le personnel enseignant des deux paliers devrait arriver à un certain consensus, à une vision commune en ce qui concerne les approches pédagogiques à utiliser. Ces méthodes devraient être basées sur les besoins particuliers des adolescentes et des adolescents de cet âge ainsi que sur les attentes formulées par le système scolaire, de même que par les parents.

La réalité peut en être cependant toute autre. Le conflit peut remplacer le consensus et alors il s'établit rapidement des rapports de force entre les différentes factions en place. Dans une perspective à long terme, il devient difficile d'en mesurer les résultats. Cuban (1992), dans son analyse historique de l'institutionnalisation des écoles intermédiaires aux États-Unis au début du xxe siècle, démontre clairement la volonté du gouvernement de mettre en place un système scolaire qui réponde de façon adéquate aux besoins de ces adolescentes et adolescents. Au fil des ans, cependant, le statut de ces écoles a été perçu de plus en plus comme celui des écoles secondaires, c'est-à-dire, possédant un statut plus académique.

Les raisons mises de l'avant par le ministère de l'Éducation et de la Formation de l'Ontario pour instaurer les années de transition semblent rejoindre les intentions que l'on a prêtées aux écoles intermédiaires anglaises et américaines. Il reste à voir si les résultats seront les mêmes. Dans un cas comme celui de l'école secondaire Pagé, où les années de transition constituent «une école dans une école», il ne faut pas rejeter la possibilité qu'à moyen et à long termes on arrive à un consensus et à une vision d'ensemble en ce qui a trait aux années de transition et qu'on réussisse ainsi à en faire quelque chose d'unique.

b) **La difficulté de développer une culture spécifique aux années de transition dans les écoles et dans le système scolaire en général.** Le but de la refonte des années de transition est de développer un contexte éducatif en termes de programmes, de méthodes d'enseignement et d'un système d'orientation qui réponde aux besoins particuliers des jeunes adolescentes et adolescents. Ce contexte, en principe, les préparera pour un apprentissage plus spécialisé au secondaire de même qu'à un milieu social différent. Cette culture particulière des années de transition se caractérise par une façon de penser et d'agir propre à ce groupe d'âge. La culture, en effet, est plus qu'un mélange statique de croyances, de normes et de symbôles. C'est un processus dynamique en évolution constante qui reflète la réalité du milieu. Dans le cas de l'école secondaire Pagé, l'analyse montre que cette culture au niveau des années de transition reste à développer, qu'on en est encore aux tous débuts et que ce processus ne peut se faire uniquement à partir d'une réorganisation administrative. Néanmoins, on doit reconnaître que cette réorganisation peut en constituer le point de départ et qu'elle est importante dans le contexte actuel.

À l'école secondaire Pagé, plusieurs facteurs ont ralenti le développement d'une culture des années de transition :

Le premier de ces facteurs est d'avoir traité le volet du projet ayant trait aux élèves de 9e année séparément de celui du transfert des élèves de 7e et 8e années, au lieu de l'avoir traité comme une composante intégrée du projet des années de transition.

Le deuxième facteur est l'insuffisance de discussions au sujet des années de transition tant au niveau philosophique qu'au niveau pratique. L'administration et le personnel enseignant ne semblent pas avoir réfléchi ensemble, de façon intensive, sur les implications de ce concept pour les écoles de cette région.

Un troisième facteur à considérer est le fait que très peu de relations ont été établies entre les élèves et le personnel enseignant des 7e et 8e années et les élèves et le personnel enseignant de la 9e année. Ce qui a eu pour conséquence de provoquer un certain isolement entre les participants et les participantes.

Finalement, l'étude de cas met en relief le rôle vital que peuvent tenir les élèves et les parents dans le développement d'une culture propre aux années de transition. Les parents se sont battus et ont obtenu de la part des autorités que leurs enfants de l'élémentaire soient isolés des élèves plus âgés du secondaire. De leur côté, les élèves de 9e année semblent éprouver certaines difficultés à se situer dans ce contexte et ils souffrent d'un manque d'appartenance au groupe des années de transition. Il s'avère primordial, dans ce contexte et ce partout en province, que l'administration, le personnel enseignant, les élèves et les parents des écoles impliquées dans ce processus de changement tentent de définir une façon de penser et d'agir commune aux deux groupes, afin de réussir à constituer éventuellement une culture propre aux années de transition.

c) **L'absence d'une vision d'ensemble en ce qui a trait à la refonte.** Jusqu'à présent, personne ne semble avoir une idée précise sur la façon de procéder en ce qui a trait à la refonte du système scolaire des années de transition. La question-clé est de savoir par où commencer. Devons-nous d'abord réfléchir sur les besoins de cette clientèle scolaire aux niveaux social, personnel et développemental? Commençons-nous par impliquer les parents? Commençons-nous avec les programmes scolaires? Ou encore avec le développement professionnel pour le personnel enseignant? En fait, un projet de refonte devrait se donner une certaine latitude en ce qui a trait aux composantes à incorporer à sa mise en oeuvre. Dans le cas de l'école secondaire Pagé, il semble que les deux composantes choisies pour le projet pilote aient constitué une fin en soi, au lieu d'être perçues comme un départ. Il en est résulté un manque de vision d'ensemble. Il semble que l'on n'ait pas réussi à brosser un tableau global de ce que l'on attend des années de transition.

d) **L'absence d'une vision commune en ce qui a trait aux années de transition.** Beaucoup a déjà été dit en ce qui concerne l'importance de se donner une vision commune pour assurer la réussite, à long terme, d'une innovation scolaire quelconque (Fullan, 1992; Louis et Miles, 1990). Le cas de l'école secondaire Pagé illustre le besoin de développer une vision commune des années de transition et la difficulté à laquelle on doit faire face lorsque cette vision n'est pas présente au tout début du projet.

Il est important de comprendre qu'il n'est pas nécessaire d'attendre que tout le monde se mette d'accord sur la vision qu'il faut se donner avant d'entreprendre une innovation quelconque. Cependant, dans un projet où cette vision est absente au départ, il devient alors nécessaire que l'administration scolaire donne la possibilité au personnel enseignant de se rencontrer de façon régulière afin de dialoguer pour générer des idées sur le changement à amorcer, mettre ces idées en pratique, en mesurer l'impact, trouver des solutions aux problèmes qui se posent en cours de route et, finalement, arriver à se donner une vision commune.

Même dans le cas où c'est l'administration elle-même qui suggère une certaine vision au projet, il est nécessaire que le personnel enseignant puisse expérimenter différentes façons de concrétiser cette vision et l'adapter à la lumière de cette expérimentation. Le projet pilote de l'école secondaire Pagé n'a pas fait preuve d'une vision commune en ce qui concerne les années de transition. Aucun mécanisme n'a été mis en place afin de susciter cette vision dans la phase d'élaboration du projet pilote, ce qui a eu pour résultat de diviser le projet en deux volets distincts, le premier ayant affaire aux 7e et 8e années et le deuxième, aux 9e années. D'ailleurs, en ce qui concerne les élèves de 9e année, le personnel enseignant et l'administration attendent toujours les directives du ministère de l'Éducation et de la Formation pour aller vraiment de l'avant. Le projet de l'école secondaire Pagé nous rappelle qu'à moins que le personnel enseignant, de concert avec l'administration, n'ait la possibilité de s'engager dans une phase de dialogue afin de développer une vision commune des années de transition, toute nouvelle politique demeurera un simple changement administratif, au lieu d'être perçue comme une véritable occasion de réorganiser les pratiques éducatives avec les jeunes adolescentes et adolescents.

e) **Refondre le système ou assurer le statu quo.** Le cas de l'école secondaire Pagé illustre bien la confusion et le manque de consensus en ce qui a trait au concept de refonte («restructuring»). Qu'est-ce que la refonte signifie dans le contexte ontarien? Aux États-Unis, le terme réfère aux changements apportés à la gouvernance scolaire, c'est-à-dire, la gestion de l'école, de même que la participation du personnel enseignant à la prise de décision. Le terme réfère également aux nouveaux rôles que détiennent les enseignantes et les enseignants, par exemple en ce qui a trait au mentorat, ainsi qu'à leur cheminement de carrière. Enfin, il peut aussi impliquer un changement fondamental dans les approches pédagogiques ainsi que dans les programmes disponibles (Murphy, 1991).

Il serait difficile de prétendre que le passage d'un horaire semestriel à un horaire annuel en français et en mathématiques pour les 9e années constitue une refonte majeure du programme de 9e année. Pas plus que le transfert des élèves de 7e et 8e années dans l'édifice du secondaire représente, lui aussi, une refonte majeure, spécialement lorsque les intervenantes et les intervenants s'entendent pour en minimiser les effets, en gardant le programme existant avant le projet pilote, en séparant les élèves et le personnel enseignant de 7e et 8e années de leurs pairs de 9e année.

Des changements ont certes eu lieu à l'école secondaire Pagé au point de vue organisationnel, de même qu'au niveau du personnel enseignant, mais ils ne semblent pas être allés réellement en profondeur. Il reste à voir si, à moyen et à long termes, ces changements conduiront à une véritable refonte dans le domaine de l'enseignement, de l'apprentissage, de l'organisation scolaire et peut-être même de la gouvernance scolaire en ce qui a trait aux années de transition. Ce processus de changement demande du temps et de l'énergie, de même que des directives claires de l'administration, que ce soit au niveau des conseils scolaires ou du ministère de l'Éducation et de la Formation lui-même, ainsi que l'instauration d'un dialogue permanent entre les différents intervenants et intervenantes. Seul l'avenir nous dira jusqu'où ira l'école secondaire Pagé dans ce processus.

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9.

Parents and the Transition Years

By

John Ainley

Introduction

This chapter reports on data concerning parents' views of various aspects of student transition to secondary school in general, and of Transition Years initiatives in particular. It is a small-scale investigation intended to complement both the survey and case study aspects of the project, but also to be relatively independent of them in its execution. It was carried out by interviewing groups of parents in four schools in Ontario. The format was organized so that parents could let us know "in their own words" their views about the transition years initiatives and the ways education at that level was, and should be, provided. It was intended to generate information about parent views, knowledge and approaches to the transition from elementary to secondary school, parents' assessment of their children's experiences, and the extent to which parents were informed and involved in the Transition Years initiatives.

Methodology

Information was obtained through a series of focus group interviews. Groups of parents were selected to participate in a discussion facilitated by the researcher. The format of these focus groups was for a brief introduction by the researcher to be followed by discussion in response to a series of prompts. Although the emphasis on particular issues varied in response to the circumstances of each setting, the prompts were common. The introduction indicated that the prompts were a guide to start and promote discussion rather than a constraining checklist. It also stressed the confidentiality of data and the fact that the facilitator was from outside the Canadian education system, so that local features might need to be explained. The prompts were:

1. What do you as a group of parents know about the Transition Years initiatives in Ontario?

2. In general terms what do you, as parents, expect schools to provide for your children in Grades 8 and 9?

3. In what ways/areas/fields do schools provide well for students in Grades 8 and 9?

4. In what ways/areas/fields do schools provide least well for students in Grades 8 and 9?

5. Thinking of the move of your child from Grade 8 to Grade 9, what did you see as:

   (a) things which were exciting and handled well?

   (b) things which were difficulties?

6. How adequately does your school provide you with information about your child's progress?

7. What do you understand by the term "core curriculum" in the Transition Years initiatives?

8. One of the Transition Years initiatives is to discontinue organizing instruction according to three levels of difficulty. What do you see as the advantages and disadvantages of "destreaming"? In general and in relation to the placement of your child.

9. Do you have any comments on the role of parents in formulating educational policy in this area? Are there ways in which the wishes of parents could be conveyed better to educational policy makers?

The focus group interviews lasted for between one hour and one and one half hours. Discussions were tape recorded and transcribed prior to analysis.

The Schools

Parents of Grade 9 students from four high schools were involved in the study. All were from suburban areas in or near Ontario cities. The selection of schools was somewhat arbitrary given the time constraints on the project. The schools had to be from school boards in which it was possible to gain access quickly. As it turned out, the schools had slightly different educational orientations: a "key pilot" Transition Years school, an example of successful "school improvement", a "traditional" academic high school and a "progressive - individualized" school. Although the sample of schools was not exclusively comprised of pilot project schools, the data and range of school types were of sufficient interest to merit inclusion within the broader ambit of this study.

School A

School A was a large high school in an area adjacent to Toronto. It had a strong commitment to the Transition Years initiatives and particularly to aspects involving developments in core curriculum, facilitating transition, guidance and assessment. It had publicized the project in its school through letters to parents, a series of project newsletters and workshops involving those elementary schools nearby which formed part of the project. A management team involving elementary and secondary schools as well as university staff coordinated the activities of the project schools. Key features of Transition Years initiative in School A were a program to support students in the transition from elementary to secondary school, establishing a core curriculum and eliminating streaming in Grade 9. It also involved providing opportunities for teachers to enhance their skills in teaching core curricula with mixed ability groups.

School B

School B was also a large secondary school in a suburban area adjacent to the Greater Toronto area. It was noted as a school which had taken a number of initiatives in recent years and had a reputation for having "improved" as a school. These initiatives supported and connected with the specific Transition Years project activities. School B had a well-articulated school plan embracing a planning model with attention to enhancing the curriculum, interfacing with the community, enhancing instructional processes, and generating a climate in the school as a place to learn. Three general aims were specified for the Transition Years project: school organization for innovative student groupings, facilitating transition from Grade 8 to 9 and involving the community (particularly parents).

The primary focus of the school organization initiatives was a joint History/English Grade 9 classroom. It aimed to provide a constant peer group, collaboration among teachers, and a nurturing home base program. It also aimed to provide increased home contact, improved contact with parents as well as more flexible use of class time. An internal evaluation indicated that the program was regarded as successful but led to some changes including scheduling classes contiguously (i.e., around double periods), providing inservice for teachers on the writing of integrated programs, destreaming the class and providing more individual instruction and support for high-risk students. Parent involvement initiatives began with the English/history class through letters explaining the project and meetings for answering questions and eventually extended to other parts of the school.

Activities concerned with facilitating transition involved augmenting many programs already in place at the school. A counselor contact program was expanded to facilitate the exchange of information between schools and to assist students in making course selections. The program led to a review and improvement of the spring tours and the introduction of activities to facilitate the social integration of new students. A mentoring program and a peer program involving senior students were also strongly supported. There was also a co-operative group learning network, operating across schools in the project, which provided support for teachers using a cooperative group learning model.

School C

School C was a relatively small secondary school of just under 1000 students. Its brief mission statement refers to "growth in learning and social development". Perceptions held by the educational community were that it had been a "traditionally oriented" school with no past emphasis on change and innovation. In the year of the study a new principal had been appointed. The principal indicated that at the beginning of the year teaching staff had been given little information about the Transition Years project. One major focus was a core program in which all students studied English keyboarding or typing, another was science taught in an integrated format to a class of mixed ability, and a third was a destreamed French class.

School D

School D was a large modern secondary school with an extensive background in offering individualized programs in a destreamed organization. These individualized programs had been in operation for over two years and were developed independently of the Transition Years initiatives although the ideas were similar. The fact that the programs had been in operation for some time meant that there had been time for parents, teachers and students to have considered their views. In addition, not being specifically part of a special pilot program meant that the ideas had their origin in the school rather than with outsiders.

The parents involved in the focus groups were volunteers nominated by the school administration according to criteria of representativeness specified by the researcher.

Parents nominated by the school were sent a letter from the researchers explaining the project and were then contacted by telephone to arrange a time for the meeting. In three of the schools the interviews were held in the early evening and in the fourth the interviews were held in the afternoon. In three schools the groups involved about 12 parents but in one the numbers were very small with just four attending. It is possible that those who took part in the interviews were more committed to the school, and more aware of educational issues, than parents in general.

Communication with Parents

One of the key components of school and family partnerships is communication between school and parents. Interviews with parents in the present study revealed several aspects of communication which appeared to be important: about the Transition Years initiatives themselves, about student progress at school and about what parents expected of schools.

The Transition Years Initiatives

Discussions with parents indicated that while knowledge about the Transition Years initiatives varied between schools, in general this was not great. There was a greater level of knowledge about the particular projects in their own school and especially regarding programs in which their own child was involved. There was little knowledge about the overall initiatives or the rationale which underpinned those initiatives.

At School D, which was not a designated pilot school, but which was a generally innovative school, there was virtually no knowledge of the Transition Years initiatives. Questions met the response:

> No, nothing, the only initiative we have seen is in this environment which is suddenly upon us.

In School C where there had been changes in administration and less commitment to the pilot, it appeared that there had been information provided but there was lack of clarity about what was happening.

> I believe that I did receive something in a newsletter indicating there was a special study group and that if parents were interested that they should come and volunteer their time. But it didn't particularly imply (action) it just said a special study was being done... this is what was happening (you know me being aware that this trend was), these changes were going to

> take place and they were asking for parents to be involved with that. It seems to me that we should have been aware of the changes were taking place and if requests were coming up for volunteers to become involved we would have put in. It didn't nobody ever explain that. And I don't know the Ministry is necessarily all that certain of what they are doing and I know that there are many teachers and many administrators who do not feel that this is necessarily the right direction we should be moving.

At Schools A and B which had communicated fairly extensively with the local school community, parental understanding of the Transition Years initiatives was based on the local pilot projects. Two parents at School A indicated that their information was a mixture of what was provided through the school and from their professional involvement outside:

> We came to the information sessions that were held at the school and the principal and the team outlined what was happening and my wife is a teacher and we knew some of the people that had been involved at both the Grade 7 and 8 level and some of those involved in the 9 and 10. In my job... I am aware of the thrust of the ministry in this regard.

At School B, the school had communicated well to those involved in the pilot program. The importance of providing information is well illustrated by the way in which the response of one parent to a letter inviting participation changed as more information became available:

> Our first response to the letter was no way, not into an experimental program. But we decided to come to the meeting, the special meeting they had and we came, my husband and I came to the meeting and were very impressed and decided to go with it.

The information which was helpful was that which reassured that their child would be in good hands:

> ...meeting the teachers for a start. Finding out they had a list of the other students that were in the class which our son got to see and he said "oh yeah I know him, him and him" and his initial reaction was, "this might make Grade 9 easier, I know these kids are going to be in my class" and when we went to the evening and heard about the program and met the teachers it was satisfying. Like we came out of it right away. We didn't have to discuss it, that was it.

The parents in the focus groups appeared to indicate that there were variations among the schools in the effectiveness of communication, that communication was greatest where school commitment to the program was greater and that communication most often concerned the program that a particular child was in rather than what the school was doing as a whole.

Reporting Student Progress

Communication about student progress in high school tends to be associated with the formal reporting of assessments. Some parents in the focus groups indicated how much they valued other forms of communication from school about their children and fairly detailed information in the reports themselves. This appeared to be especially so for the first year at high school. Consider the delight expressed by one parent at School B:

> I got a phone call at work one afternoon and one of the girls said, "it is your son's math teacher" and I thought, "oh no!" This was last year in Grade 9. She said, "I just wanted to let you know how wonderful your son has been doing in his math."

Another indicated the value placed on information about a broad range of aspects of schooling:

> I want to know about their behaviour, their attitudes towards the teacher ... whether they are making it to classes on time and actually being there. They have a very good system here because on the report cards here there is a place for the mark and a remark from each teacher, a lengthy remark which is great.

Generally, the extent and range of communication at School B was regarded favourably by the parents in the focus group:

> Communication with the teachers about my son at high school is excellent. If I called they got back to me either immediately or the next morning which I found really interesting and they are glad to see you; why are you here, this is wonderful. I find that very positive. I got positive phone calls saying 'made contact to tell you how well things are going'; you could have blown me off the chair. I hadn't expected that.

Interpretation of the meaning of reports is considered important, and something that requires personal communication with the teacher. Consider the views of a parent at a different school:

> We have to rely on our children to tell us the truth for one thing and the reports that the school send are fair but really I think it doesn't say too much. It is very brief and so you more or less have to talk to the children and look at the report card and go to the parent teacher interviews to really decide if your children is on track ... I think I would like the teacher at the school to get back to us more often. Up to now I have never really heard anything from the school... notes come home at the odd time.

Another parent commented in ways which indicated the importance of the child having been recognized individually:

> I like to see the comment because the student reads the comment too and that sometimes makes the child think, "well my effort was recognized just by that simple comment" which could be 4 or 5 words which can really make the student feel good ... The only problem I have is that the comments are computer generated. I would much rather see the comments column handwritten by the teacher.

On the other hand, a parent from School C expressed the view that written comments didn't need to be too elaborate:

> The comments don't have to be too elaborate because it is up to us to pursue it with the teachers. If I see a C or a D then obviously my child is needing my help. If they want it to be stronger I think I would pursue it with the teacher. I don't expect to see it on a report card but at least you know I think it gives us guidelines whether we need to pursue it further.

Parents who wish to understand the progress being made by their child find that the reporting of "marks" is not enough. This concern was evident in pleas for guides to interpretation; either through extended comment or some reference point. When a reference point was mentioned it was typically normative, a comparison of marks or grades with a "norm". When parents mentioned this type of comparison they implied that a mark or grade by itself didn't convey much about their child's progress:

> And most of my son's teachers have also taken the time to put first test, second test, quiz and the individual mark on every one of those things so that you can see clearly .... how they have been doing.

> And I do like the written comments much more than a number crunched into a computer .

> I look at marks (I am not going to say I don't). I use them as an indicator. I think it can be difficult sometimes to even refer to it and explain to the child that you are not saying you know you got this grade or percentage

> this time you got to get this next time. If you evaluated his skills, and if the teacher has indicated, and the child agrees with it that there are some things that maybe he or she could do that she has not been doing and I think you can use that as a benchmark and say can you think you can improve this.

Some parents in all groups expressed the desire for a median but these comments were slightly more prevalent in the group from School C than elsewhere:

> The median mark is also important because if you are getting 70 and everybody else got 60 then they are doing great so the median is quite helpful ... That is why I think the median is very helpful.
>
> I like to see a median so I know where they are in relation to the rest of the group.
>
> I would like to know along the same point the benchmark to see how they are doing.

There was less frequent mention of alternative reference points, such as criteria of progress or benchmarks in these interviews. However many of the concerns about the interpretation of marks would be met by such a system:

Another theme in communication about student progress was that of having stable points of contact in the school. Stability in points of contact for parents appeared to be considered important in facilitating communication. For one parent, one of the pilot projects had an important benefit for communication:

> From a very different angle, my son is in this pilot project and my son is not well. He has missed a lot of school over the last three years and from my point of view we decided that it would probably definitely be to his advantage to have two teachers knowing exactly what his problems are. If he misses school both teachers are involved. It's not as if you go from one room there is this big pause to another teacher and there is that communication between the two.

But in another case there was no such stability:

> ... has had about 5 or 6 math teachers in the course of 3 months because for one reason or another they had supply teacher and then the original teacher left and got a full time job and he has about 5 or 6 different math teachers and so if he wasn't a good student in math he could be really floundering but he is a fairly good math student so with the help of his

> Dad he's making it but a child who isn't that good in math could be really floundering.

Communication among teachers is important also.

> They had the same number of teachers to be in touch with. It is just that the teachers are also in touch with one another and they interrelate their subjects.

In School D, which operates a de-streamed and individualized program, communication about student progress is more complex because parents need information not only about standards of attainment but also about the rate of progress through units.

> Well we have to rely on our children to tell us the truth for one thing and the reports that the school send our are fair but really I think it doesn't say too much. In detail it is very brief and so you more or less have to talk to the children and look at the report card and go to the parent-teacher interviews to really decide if your children is on track.
>
> I actually find the time lapse is critical in this program. If you lose touch in the communication between the school and the outside the kids control the game.
>
> We get interim report cards, status reports, monthly which shows us how many units they have completed, how many units they are expected to complete in the entire block but it does not really give you an indication how many units the medium or norm should be at to have some sort of reference point.

I actually think that the communication this year improved dramatically compared with last year. I seem to get the information I wanted almost right away which wasn't the case last year.

Parental Expectations

The response by parents in relation to reporting student progress raised the interesting question as to what parents expect schools to provide; what sorts of things they expect their children to gain from coming to school. It appeared that expectations were broad.

> I would like mine to learn more. I don't feel my younger one in Grade 7 is being educated enough. ...They go to school to learn to be social. Basically we should get an education.

> Education is therefore life skills basically to prepare for life and some job at the end of it, whatever they want. A stress on work habits is what appeals.
>
> Self-esteem, our daughter has built a really positive self-esteem and I think if that happens the other things have a better chance of happening.
>
> It means teaching them the basic skills so they can feel good about their accomplishments and abilities.
>
> The extra-curricula activities help mould the children working in a group setting outside the school. It promotes pride, it promotes self-confidence. They are working towards an aim and its related to the school and I think it directly effects how they view the school.

Summary

Among the parents who took part in these focus groups there was a concern that communication between the school and parents was important. Most of the communication which parents recalled and discussed concerned their own children rather than the school in general. The form of communication reflected the fact that schools operated more as service providers than as organizations responsive to the needs and wishes of the community. While parents wished to have more information about the school overall, they did value detailed personal reporting of their children's progress but needed some clear point of reference, either numerically or descriptively, for such reports to be meaningful. Only one of the four schools appeared to communicate with parents early and extensively about innovations affecting their children, and to report continuously and meaningfully about their individual children's progress.

Curriculum and Organization

The focus group interviews with parents generated a range of comments about three aspects of curriculum and organization which were central to the Transition Years initiatives. Parents commented about the process of transition to high school from middle, or junior high schools. They discussed at length issues associated with streaming or grouping students into courses of different levels of difficulty. Finally they discussed aspects of choice of study areas and core curriculum in the Transition Years. In this chapter of the report an attempt is made to distill from the conversations some of the essential themes emerging from what parents said.

The Transition Process

Parents of schools involved in the pilot projects commented favourably on the experience of their children in the transition to high school. Three parents from School commented:

> I think of the Transition Years as terrific. The transition has been so easy so happy ... it was going to be a big thing going to high school and now he thinks "Gosh, what was I worrying about."
>
> Some things that have happened are really, really good.
>
> My younger son was really nervous about coming into this program. He acts really cool you know that nothing bothers him but he was terrified coming into high school ... It has been like a great weight lifted off his shoulders and as with X's son he is Grade 10. He is not in Grade 9 but in Grade 9 there were some things he found difficult but overall it was a really positive experience and he hadn't expected it to be that way.

At School A, a similar view was endorsed by its parents:

> I thought the whole entry into Grade 9 was well handled. They started back in April. They had a choir. It was made up of kids from all schools. They had a band. I like the idea of a BBQ in the summer where they brought the kids in early and introduced them to the school, showed the importance of the students' council. I thought that whole entry transition was really good. I saw that as healthy.
>
> That was really good. The Grade 9's were not so frightened the first time.

Parents from Grade 8 could see further developments in the transition program which would benefit their children:

> It is likely to be more involved next year because the school that my kids go to next year their Grade 8 teachers will be coming to (this high school) with them to go through the Transition Years.
>
> They have not sorted out whether it is going to be for two periods and then our kids will be integrated into gym or whatever on other programs here.

Successful transition was seen to be related to schools providing clear information to parents and students as well as offering continuing support:

> The school also put out something I thought was good. I call it an expectation booklet. They put out that book for all the youngsters at the beginning that was a study book and in it laid out what the expectations of the school were and what we could expect as parents from the school. Certain reporting would be done, if you had a concern who to call. It must have cost them a fortune to invest in that. I tell you I think it was good investment.

But that support must respect the student's growth to independence:

> I think they are treated like adults. I think they are expected to get their work done and hand it in and take the test and they are treated like adults and most of them live up to it.

Streaming and Destreaming

Discussion of issues associated with destreaming was more extensive than for any other issue. This partly reflects the fact that de-streaming has been more widely publicized and has been legislatively more pressing than other Transition Years initiatives and partly it reflects the passions which this issue always seems to arouse. The parent interviews contained expressions of a wide range of views on streaming. Many of those expressions of opinion were clearly based on extensive thought and in all of the groups an informed debate took place. Even those who favoured streaming often conceded it's lack of flexibility in practice and its deleterious influence on those placed in the general levels.

Consider the views of one parent from School B who began with a statement in support of streaming but went on to acknowledge in detail one of the problems associated with that position.

> I think it is a good idea to separate the children... But also give the child a chance to move up if they are capable of it. My son has gone into general... but he is now beginning to mature and says "I can do advanced". But he has been told he can't because he didn't take advanced in Grade 9. Well I don't know if he could do it. He would have to do a lot of work. But he has been told already, "No you can't do it." Well I don't think that is fair to him. If he wants to try he should be allowed to try. He might not manage it but he feels he can, so I feel he should be allowed to try. But I think it is good to keep them separate because you do have disruptive people and it is not fair to people who want to learn... Anyway I feel disruptive (students) shouldn't be allowed to spoil other people's chances.

Another member of the group argued that grouping students into levels can exacerbate problems of behaviour and motivation in the general levels:

> She is referring to behaviour but you are talking about ability grouping when you say general and advanced ...I would like the kids in general to be challenged just as well as those in advanced and enriched. I think sometimes what happens is they all get lumped in one category. There are some who are really trying who are in different levels. Everyone should be challenged. I think as long as the child feels stimulated the ones who are really trying and who could (learn), but they are not given encouragement or they aren't stimulated once they are at that level ... I am excited when my kids have great teachers. My kid has an enriched science teacher so I mean I like that too, but the flip side is what if he was at the other level. I had friends from when I went to school or people whose kids don't have those opportunities and I think it should be available to everybody and a lot of times what happens you get into a trap and you stay there.

One parent in the group drew attention to a situation in which they could compare different classes for the one student:

> ... a very interesting thing happened from my point of view with my son. He has taken all the advanced classes except he is taking general French. Because we move so frequently, his background in French is extremely limited so he is taking the general French program. It is just a disaster in that classroom and he says "You know I will never take another general course because nobody pays any attention, nobody knows what is going on". I don't know what is happening in there.

Some argued that this was especially a problem with general classes in Grade 9:

> This is Grade 9 ... Grade 10 it all disappears.
>
> It is a shame it happened to my son in Art and unfortunately he got turned off the art classes and it was crazy in there. So this year he is taking mechanics, the general course, and I said how is the behaviour? It's fine. We are in Grade 10 now. It was the kids in transition, you have pointed out I think, were not handling Grade 9 or whatever or just the mix in that one particular.

The concern became the quality of the educational experience for students whose program was largely comprised of general level courses:

> ... probably what you are saying is correct, but from my point of view, if he is taking this one general class and he is so out of touch with this whole

> situation, the students that are taking a whole day of general courses must just have their minds blown by the end of the day. They are just right out of control because they don't know what they are doing half the time. I don't know if I am making sense to any of you or not but it just gave me the impression that the kids taking the general program are not getting what we think they are getting in school.
>
> I would like to think of a way to raise that general class and I am not sure necessarily that streaming is the way to do it.

The discussion at School C was also lively and similar themes were raised, although there was overall more opposition to destreaming Grade 9. Several parents supported the view expressed by one of their number that:

> I think the purpose (of streaming) when we got into it was because we have a group of children who are not interested, and others who are extremely interested and extremely well equipped to handle it. By putting them in the same class you have frustration. Those that are able and more advanced are frustrated because things are held back. I think the original purpose was because of that problem. You should keep them separated. Those that are advanced who want to learn and are highly motivated ... But now you are going to put them all together again.
>
> I disagree with that intent because those who are not interested are not going to be that much more motivated ... Do they think the advanced kids are going to help the basic kids.

The issue of the quality of educational provision for those in the general level classes entered through the words of another parent:

> ... if you have ever been in a basic level class in a high school it is a 'ghettoized' area. It really is. The students feed on each others' problems and intensify the problem and I think the only answer for that kind of problem is to integrate them with people so they are exposed to other ways of learning and other ways of life.

Those who supported the continuation of a policy of ability grouping in three levels argued that this organizational pattern was simply a reflection of the abilities among students:

> The children are not stupid and they are going to say "Alright, if I am middle of the road, if I am not doing as well. They are putting me with smart kids. What do I get 'rubbed off'?" I think the feeling would be of anger more than anything.

But the problem of assigning students to levels and the consequences of that assignment still loomed large for parents. In this instance, the parent was thinking of immediate consequences for self-concept rather than the longer term consequences of being unable to move from a particular track:

> The situation arose where it was recommended for my daughter to go into general math and there had never been a problem in math, only B's and A's. When that came home, there was certain consternation on our part for that recommendation. That recommendation certainly made my daughter feel that perhaps she wasn't as bright in math or as talented as many others. I think streaming also has that effect which is rather negative. I think, and you talk about integrating students together in classes, I think when you are streaming in advanced, enriched and back to basics or general or whatever you call it. I think that does as much to ghettoize and I don't think that is particularly good.

At another school (School A) a parent expressed confusion about how to make the best decision regarding which level to select given that the ramifications of that choice would be profound:

> We thought it was difficult to choose what level to put your child in but we had directions from the Grade 8 teacher. Then when we came here, the teacher put him into a different level because he wasn't in the right level for his abilities so they changed him here. So it is not something that is going to be overlooked if you do put them in the lower level. I think they recognize early on if they can do more.

Another parent elaborated:

> I think parents have to work too hard to find out information about those levels. The information is not too forthcoming.
>
> And unless you are really aggressive to find out that information you really don't find it. I mean no one seems to be there volunteering it ... Well the expectations laid out by the Grade 8 teacher were not in fact what she met here and it confused her. She got mixed messages.
>
> I think [information about courses] is too hard to get right now. I think it is too difficult from a parents point of view to find out about things like advanced and general unless you go searching for it. You shouldn't have to do that because most parents don't. Therefore it should be more easily understood by parents. I don't know how but it should be.

Once again the problem of moving between levels was raised:

> Do you know what I don't like? Some of the kids would go into the general and do the years to Grade 11. They can handle the advanced ... It is hard for them to go up to the next level and I don't think that is fair, I don't know if they can or not. I never did find out for sure.

Given the consequences, it is not surprising that parents adopt the view.

> For my child it turned out we did not have to make those decisions but if I had been juggling general - advanced I think I would have tended toward the advanced, knowing students who are more studious might be in the advanced and my child might get the better classroom behaviour.

Core Curriculum

Among the parents in these focus groups there was a view that the curriculum in Year 9 should focus on certain general areas (which are often referred to as core) with relatively little support being expressed for expanding choice and diversity. "But there is not much choice in Grade 9. You can only choose two or three subjects". Those who had experience of the pilot programs where there was a combination of subjects taught in a coordinated manner by two or more teachers spoke favourably of their experience. These programs involved combinations such as English and history, English and geography and science and mathematics.

One parent of a child in the English and history program saw the advantages in terms of cohesion:

> They had the same number of teachers to be in touch with. It is just that the teachers are also in touch with one another and they interrelate their subjects.

At another school, parents were less clear about the programs.

> I understand that there are two classes ... taking the subjects at the same time and there are two teachers and they sometimes put them all in the one room, at least for a while they did. It was a little confusing, I found.
>
> I don't think they have a really good handle on what, maybe now they do, on what the expectations are in the English program.
>
> Our child has a problem with the hook up of geography and English but she understands better now why they link them together. The thing that

> impressed me was the night that we came for the, I don't know what it was called, orientation? When we moved around and did the classes, the thing that really impressed me was that ... (after a while I got to think that the teachers were almost being too defensive about it) they wanted to assure us they had worked together for a year, that they had taken courses to prepare them for this and that they knew one another. I especially remember the geography and the English teacher making sure that we understood that they had worked together and they had planned together and that it was very much a team approach to what they were doing.
>
> I know the students have had a questionnaire, a survey done on their attitudes and things about school. They did that in September I believe ... And it came home in some publication.

A survey of student attitudes conducted in this school indicated that attendance was better. It was found that the students in this kind of group liked to come, there was not as much absenteeism, and attitudes were more favourable.

One of the issues raised in the evaluation of pilot programs is that part of the success might have arisen from the particular teachers involved:

> My concern about the program is [that it is] a pilot program in which the people teaching have been chosen. They are really good teachers ... what really worries [me is] how on earth are they going to introduce this across the board... They are not going to have enough teachers of that calibre. So I think the whole idea is really really good but I just wonder, is it not probably as good as the teacher who is teaching?
>
> That is a good point. What you are saying though, you know, with the three core subjects, it is only as good as the teacher in every case ...

Individualizing

One form of curriculum organization proposed, and used in some instances, to meet the challenges of providing a unified program to a diverse student body in the Transition Years is individualization. One of the schools in this study had implemented an extensively individualised program. Even in this system issues of student grouping and curriculum organization need constant attention.

One parent described the system as.

> My understanding was that the learning is shifted on to the learner from the teacher from the conventional system. The learner progresses on his own. It is natural enough. The system is fantastic but are some of those

> kids of the age when they are going into Grade 9 mature enough to do that?
>
> There is choice in specific learning activities. There might be a choice of three things they have to do one of in a learning guide but they all progress through the same learning guides. They can follow the path ... that suits them but it has the same level, degree of difficulty.

In such a setting one of the issues which emerges is that of social learning, of students learning from other students.

> I think that was a shortcoming in 1990. If your child is ahead and she is the only one ahead and in order to have a discussion, especially in English, you need more than one. Of course if there is three or four others at the same level, then she does get a discussion with the teacher and she finds that very interesting. At this school the information from the Transition Years initiatives was still relevant to the development of curriculum materials.
>
> We are learning... that the transition information does apply to our kids. In other words the insecurity they feel so strongly we tend to forget or push it back. I wouldn't want to go back to Grade 9 for anything.... As we learn we change.

Additional issues concerned the monitoring of student progress through units in such a complex system. The question of progress can be important:

> And frustrated too thinking "Well I am ahead" and yet the teacher says I am not. And you know he is yet an A student. Of course he did drop a little bit but you expect it going into Grade 9 from Grade 8. But then they also say it's individual work but they give you project work to work with somebody else. If the somebody else is not at your level the teacher won't let one student go ahead.

Summary

Those parents from the focus groups in schools where there had been a program concerned with transition reported that those initiatives had worked well. Where there had been attempts at providing cohesion in the teaching of related subjects they also found this had benefits for them and their children. There was a good deal more dispute about destreaming of Grade 9 with a wide range of views being expressed. The range of views expressed echoed those in the educational research literature (see Volume 4 for the review of the research). Certainly there was concern by some parents that the best possible environment be provided for those who were highly motivated and achieving well in their subjects. For some parents this implied streaming. However, there was a corresponding concern for the quality of education provided in general level courses if they were separated. Many parents had a sensitive understanding of what happened in classrooms. Another concern, personal for several of the parents, was that an initial selection of course levels in Grade 9 could not easily be changed. Some of those in favour of streaming qualified that support with a plea for flexibility in the movement of students between levels. Others pointed out that such movement was usually not possible, that streaming into levels created rigidities in practice. It is likely that for parents, just as much as for teachers, attitudes towards destreaming are attitudes towards an abstraction (Hargreaves, et al., 1992). In this respect, as destreaming in Grade 9 becomes institutionalized, and parents experience their students' movement through this new pattern of organization, developments and shifts in parental views, in whatever direction, should be monitored very closely.

Conclusion

Fullan (1991) distinguishes two types of parental involvement, instructional and non-instructional. Under non-instructional forms of parental involvement he distinguishes participation in governance and forms of community-school relations. Under instructionally related involvement, he includes activities such as being at the school as a volunteer or assistant in the classroom program, and involvement in learning activities at home in homework, projects or as a home tutor. Generally instructionally related participation has beneficial effects on the learning by the parents child but there is no evidence of similar effects for participation by parents in governance. However, McGaw et al (1992) suggest that there are some indirect benefits in engaging public commitment; in tapping additional resources, advocacy for the school and building support for the introduction of innovations.

The study reported in this chapter did not directly investigate instructional involvement in the Transition Years. Its focus was on parental attitudes to educational issues central to the Transition Years initiatives. It found varied levels of awareness about what was being attempted in the Transition Years initiatives. Parents in the interviews were most aware of the program which involved their own child, were less aware of initiatives across the school and were relatively unaware of the changes across the province. In the interviews conducted as part of the present study, there appeared to be a need for schools to provide parents with more information about school programs and events. Epstein and colleagues (1989) have argued that regular (weekly) school newsletters can be effective in building parental awareness of the school program.

As young people progress through school there are continuing changes in each element of the triangular relationship between school, student and family. In the formative years there is a sense in which the student is in a relationship of dependence both at school and home. In these years it could be said that both school and family exercise a custodial responsibility either in parallel or, preferably, in an overlapping way. Communication centred on the progress of the individual child is the central link between family and school. In the specialization years students will have developed a sense of independence and an identity which is more individually separate from family. Schools increasingly deal with students directly about many matters rather than involve the family. Students increasingly are seen as responsible for their own learning. In between, in the Transition Years the relationship between family and school changes because relationships between family and student and between student and school are also changing. If the student's growing independence is to be respected, the nature of the links between family and school will change. Parental knowledge about the school as a whole becomes more important than in earlier years as the bridge between family and school. It was not coincidental that the schools which had the strongest links with parents regarding student progress were also the schools in which parents had been best informed about the Transition Years pilot programs.

Parents in the focus groups were aware of important issues such as streaming and core curriculum. There was a sense in which they were aware of the complexities of these areas and a sense in which the contributions which they made to the discussion were based on practical personal experience of their own or their friends. That sort of personal knowledge can enhance school planning and many schools could benefit from enhancing the opportunities for input from parents. Communication between family and school should be two-way so that parents are not only advocates for their school but are able to help shape its directions.

There is much that many schools still have to achieve in terms of including parents in the process of innovation and change early, even when there remains some uncertainty, rather than delaying until teachers and administrators are absolutely certain about their own directions. To follow this second pattern of involvement, is to follow a pattern of consultation (deciding, then informing) rather than of collaboration and cooperation (wrestling with the uncertainty together). Informing parents late about upcoming innovations rather than involving them early also raises levels of anxiety and hostility unnecessarily when parents have alternative access to information about upcoming policy changes, particularly through the media.

There is much that many schools can also do about involving parents in relation to the progress of their own individual children on a continuous basis, through more extensive, continuous and interactive forms of student reporting. However, more anecdotal description within these reports may lack meaning for many parents who are also clearly searching for some definite points of reference (whether this be a norm or a standard) against which the description of the child's progress is being compared, and which give that description some context and meaning.

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10.

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS:

Reflections on the Cases

by

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Looking across cases for common themes is a hazardous business. It is tempting to line up similarly worded observations, to point to apparently like-minded participants, or to list related problems and successes and conclude that there are many comparable experiences with the Transition Years' initiatives. Yet apparent similarities in the texts are often subtly yet significantly different to the individuals and situations represented in each chapter. A certain caution is therefore necessary when one tries to make claims that apply to all the schools in the six case studies.

In fact, readers are in the best position to make the most trustworthy comparisons. They can use their own perspectives and recollections as a basis for judging the relevance of the reported cases to their personal and professional lives. In this case-by-case process, readers can determine the transferability of particular incidents, issues, or interpretations to their own settings. Cases that are either contrasting or similar can provide valuable bases for comparison. Each of our case study schools has focused on its own particular combination of Transition Years components. Different components have been emphasized in each setting, as have different combinations of components. The learnings we can usefully glean from these cases about the change substance of Transition Years components, cannot therefore be generalized or summarized in any meaningful way for all the cases. Indeed, readers should return to our chart at the beginning of the volume, find which cases address the components that interest them, and use the case as a mirror to peer into their own practice.

However, the cases together have generated some insights and learnings about the Transition Years restructuring initiative overall, about the patterns of change (the change process) through which it is being implemented in different settings, and indeed about the substance of some of the Transition Years components themselves. The following nine statements are observations and interpretations which linger from ongoing conversations among the case study researchers and from reviews of the preceding chapters. The magnitude and focus of the change, its relationship to people's purposes, the ways teachers and students deal with their respective transitions, and the under-realized importance of the teacher's voice, knowledge, and actions are themes that resonate within and across most of the cases. As with the cases themselves, readers will have to interact with and interrogate these concluding comments in relation to their own cross-case comparisons.

1. The Transition Years initiatives involve much more than destreaming

Since the start of the study, the issue of destreaming has become the eye of the Transition Years' storm. A growing number of "de" words identify both the targets (destreaming, delabelling and decoursing) and the sources of the concerns (deprive students of a sound education, deface the program, and debase the value of teacher judgements). While this surrounding debate creates the impression that the Transition Years initiatives are synonymous with destreaming, most of the participants in the six case studies know differently.

The Transition Years initiatives involve more than changes in program-testing procedures or course requirements. They also involve fundamental changes in how teachers work with their students, with their colleagues and administrators, and with the community. These changes are causing many people to rethink how they approach the change process itself.

Many of the participants appreciate the scope of the Transition Years initiatives and the place of destreaming as one aspect of the much broader change agenda. The initiatives call for changes in all three grades of 7, 8 and 9, and in many areas of practice — not just ability grouping. By itself, however, destreaming is neither the core nor the central component in restructuring schooling during the early years of adolescence. Teachers who are actively experiencing destreaming are quickly coming to recognize that it means more than teaching to the middle, or teaching three or four groups around a textbook-based program that leaves all the other parameters of teaching, learning, program, evaluation and classroom organization intact. Destreaming is one part, albeit an important one, of a large learning mosaic. On its own, it is a meaningless fragment of disconnected activity. When interpreted as a minimalist 'modifying down' of existing advanced-level courses for other students, (to ease workload for teachers or assuage anxiety for parents) it realizes neither the spirit nor the potential of mixed ability practice and consigns mixed ability to a fate of mediocrity. When combined with other pieces of the mosaic, destreaming forms part of a coherent and restructured picture of what effective education in Grade 9 can look like. In this sense, destreaming profoundly affects the program organization, classroom delivery and staff allocation in Grade 9.

2. The Transition Years initiatives involve teachers in different places of learning

The breadth and depth of the changes implied by the Transition Years initiatives are summarized in Table 1 below. If a school pursues the initiatives on all fronts, teachers can be simultaneously involved in learning new teaching practices (in the classroom), organizing peer support strategies (in the corridors), revising and testing new units (in the staffroom or backroom), and reviewing new program requirements with parents (in the community). Those schools that take on this multi-level and multi-dimensional change mandate require immense commitment and creativity from their teachers. More than this, focused as they might be on the staffroom, the classroom, the corridors or the community, each teacher might be at a very different point of learning and change. The result could very well be a different learning place for everyone.

Table 1: Scope of the Change

I. Teacher - Student

Context		Component
In the classroom	**1.**	**Core and integrated curriculum**
	2.	**Destreaming (school organization)**
	3.	**Assessment and Evaluation**
In the corridors	**4.**	**Student Support Services** • career education • facilitating transitions • guidance and special education • remediation and enrichment • mentor programs

II. Teacher-Teacher, Resource Person, Administrators, Parent, Community Member

In the Staffroom or backroom	5.	Inservice teacher education • cooperative planning • joint experimentation and action research • training modules and institutes
	6.	Revised structures (school organization) • multidisciplinary staff cohorts • shared decision-making • elementary-secondary liaisons • cross-panel teaching (elementary and secondary • transfer of grades 7 and 8 to secondary school facilities
In the community	7.	Community involvement • reporting to parents • participation in program and school operation • communication and public relations

3. The major changes in the case study schools have been in the corridors and in the backrooms

Only three of the six case studies — Allendale, Lincoln, and L'École Secondaire du Sud-Ouest — include schools which are actively engaged in changes in three or all four contexts. In two of the other three case studies — Briarwood family of schools and Shoreline Secondary School — the schools are either poised or are preparing to move on more components of the Transition Years' initiatives. In the last case study — École Secondaire Pagé — the focus was mainly on changes in just one of the four contexts described above. All of the schools are making progress in helping students prepare for and adapt to the transition from elementary to secondary school and in bringing teachers together to make decisions about the content, pace, and form of the changes. The evidence of changes in the classroom and in the community, though present in some cases, is at best uneven. Some schools are in the early phases of change in classroom practices and community relationships and other schools are not addressing these areas at all.

Tactically, starting in the corridors and in the backroom makes sense. For example, where a secondary school staff does not have a history of working closely with each other or with their elementary school colleagues, it is reasonable to begin with planning groups both inside and across departments and to schedule meetings between representatives from the elementary and secondary schools. Or, in anticipation of significant changes in how teachers relate to their students in the classroom, it may be necessary to begin with creating more opportunities to meet with students in homerooms, for counselling, or during informal orientation activities. Yet again, before establishing a school management council of teachers, administrators, parents and other community members, it may be advisable to invite parents and community members to participate in professional development programs, to attend staff meetings, or to volunteer in classrooms. Incremental approaches are based on the logic of "act small, think big" (Fullan, 1988) and the need to set the stage for change. For some of the schools, this stage-setting is itself a significant and challenging innovation and consequently, requires as much or more time and support as any other change initiative.

For many of the participants in the case study schools, the proposed changes for the classroom are the most significant, profound, and sometimes most controversial of all. Teachers, in particular, have numerous concerns (see the next section for a discussion of their coping strategies). While their views range from outright opposition to enthusiastic endorsement of the changes, most of the teachers recognize the immense challenge ahead and the need for considerable time and resources, both human and material. Until the scale of support matches the magnitude of the change, many teachers are hesitant to take the initiatives from the backroom and corridors into the classroom. This too makes sense for teachers who do not want to venture into new territory without the necessary retraining and structural assistance for successful implementation.

Is it better to start small in the corridors and in the backroom or to start big in all four contexts? The worry of starting small with primarily organizational strategies is that the changes may not ultimately reach into the classroom or out to the community, especially if encouragement and support does not extend beyond what in implementation terms is the relatively short time scale of two years (the duration of the pilot projects). Improving the business of schooling does not necessarily lead to improving the experience of schooling. The worry of starting on all fronts, especially when the school has no tradition of reform, is that the changes may exhaust and overwhelm the implementors. In our lighthouse school case, we have seen how this strategy can tax even the most enthusiastic teachers to the limits.

Beginning in the corridors and in the backroom is an effective change approach if the participants have the classroom and the community in their sights and occasionally, in their steps. Ultimately, changes in relationships between teachers and students, and among teachers themselves are interdependent and reach into all four contexts. But changes often take longer, require more resources, and demand more effort than anticipated. Starting where short-term gains are most likely is strategically smart if it seems that these successes will create momentum for changes in the more challenging zones of the classroom and community.

4. Teachers cope best with unclear or uncertain changes that impact on their identities and sense of success, when they respond to them *collectively* and *concretely*

Teachers in the pilot projects are in the midst of career transition. They are working through the implications of changing their professional perspectives and practices. Most teachers are making successful adjustments to a number of changes. Some of these successes are listed in Table 2.

Table 2

Teachers' Adjustments to Transition Years Changes

A. Short-Term Adjustments for Most Teachers

- Orientation activities
- Student information and support mechanisms
- Elementary - secondary liaisons

B. Evolving Adjustments for Many Teachers

- Planning groups
- Multidisciplinary approaches
- School-based professional development
- Cross-panel teaching (elementary and secondary)

The anticipated and, in a few places, experienced transitions in classroom practices are the sources of greatest variation in coping behaviour by the teachers. In the beginning, teachers have to establish whether or not they even want to deal with destreamed classes, a core and integrated curriculum, or cross-panel teaching. Each teacher addresses one or more of the following questions prior to and during implementation:

- Do I want to do it? Is it worth doing?
- Do I have a say in what and how it happens?
- Can I do it and adapt it to my situation?
- How do I know if I am doing it effectively?
- How do I determine if it works and is an improvement on what I did before?
- When can I stop doing it or replace it with something I can do better?

These questions are a screen through which teachers sift their concerns about destreaming, core and integrated curriculum and cross-panel teaching, and the associated strategies of instruction and evaluation.

Increasingly, teachers have been asked to respond to the diversity of language, culture, race, religion, socioeconomic circumstance, gender, and special learning needs of their students. At the secondary school level, the three levels of difficulty — basic, general, and advanced — have provided an organizational strategy for acknowledging and containing the range of ability in any one classroom and for setting up distinct academic paths towards particular careers. Destreaming asks teachers to postpone this tracking for one year, a move seen as the last straw by some and the first opportunity for significant reform by others. As a result, teachers not only have to work through their own reticence about and resistance to destreaming but also have to do so in a climate of controversy and debate.

In some ways, destreaming is an ideological and philosophical issue of equity. In many respects, though, it is also a concrete and practical one of manageability. To understand that destreaming can be done and that it means more than just modifying existing programs down, or reinscribing streaming *within* classes rather than *between* them, teachers need to talk about destreaming, see practical examples of it, and most importantly of all, work through it themselves, to even deeper levels of awareness and expertise. When destreaming is dealt with collegially and concretely, it is more likely to lead to success.

Less tension but similar uncertainty surround the efforts to create a core and integrated curriculum. While the concept of core curriculum has general support, teachers are unsure about what constitutes essential learnings and whether these required elements are unique to each discipline or common across the curriculum. When the core is seen as common to a cluster of disciplines (for example, mathematics, science and technology) or to the entire curriculum, the notion of integrated units of study emerges.

After years of training and socialization in a subject culture, teachers have little practice in conceptualizing and delivering their courses within blended formats. They have some confusion about the meaning of curriculum integration, alternatively construing it as investigating the same general topic in different subjects, examining a problem through different processes and perspectives available in broad disciplinary categories (for example, social sciences, the arts), or exploring personally relevant questions through both interdisciplinary and nondisciplinary avenues (see Hargreaves, 1992; Case, 1991; Werner, 1991).

Working closely with colleagues in cross-disciplinary and, in four cases, cross-panel teams removes some of the concerns about and alleviates many of the uncertainties surrounding integration. Within teams, integration is more about building professional relationships than breaking down philosophical and epistemological walls. In this respect, the most important benefit of integration is not so much that it brings together material, but that it brings together people; people who develop shared understandings of and responses to the needs of the students who are their learners. Yet, for those who have still to experience any version of curriculum integration, the road seems unpaved and unwanted. Among those who are trying out various approaches, the need to develop alternative frameworks for organizing knowledge usually leads to a cross-department forum for planning and coordination. Teachers value the increased collegial dialogue this creates but wonder about how compatible a school-within-a-school strategy is with their longstanding departmental structures

Even in secondary schools most inclined towards integration, there remains a strong and ever-present gravitational pull towards departmentalization and subject-based learning in teachers' identities and career structures, in the allocation of resources and workrooms, in the pressures and priorities of the years beyond Grade 9, and in the assumptions of parents within the community. Integration seems to be an issue that cannot be contained within a Grade 9 program, or be controlled by individual schools in the long term. Its effective implementation against the pull of subject traditions and departmental policies may therefore require new legislative ground rules that apply to all schools and have more than advisory status.

One continuing condition for successful change is the capacity for and commitment to collective effort among a school's staff. Traditional secondary school structures can erode these efforts and wear people down with the demands of their separate departments. In secondary schools, therefore, integrating people also means integrating curriculum content. Collective effort is therefore both an outcome and a condition of successful integration. But the demands of departmentalism are so great that the support for these collective efforts may well need to extend beyond individual teachers' good will and beyond ingenuity of leadership within the school, to protective legislative frameworks outside of it.

For teachers involved in cross-panel teaching, there are also periods of adaptation to endure. In many cases, this creates tension. In some of the cases studied, secondary school teachers were also involved in teaching at the elementary school level. After years of working with older students, teaching students in Grades 7 and 8 constitutes a challenge for most of the teachers involved. They need to learn about the needs and demands of this specific age group. This transition for the teachers involved can become quite difficult in some instances, as attempts to span the gaps of structure and practice between elementary and secondary schools are made.

5. Without active involvement in innovation, students are among the most powerful protectors of the past. Their voices on the realities of restructuring are privately strong, but publicly silent

Students are in the throes of adolescence. Their lives are in transition and, to varying degrees, so are their careers as students. Despite their different situations and vantage points, teachers and students have similar strategies for coping with their respective transitions.

Table 3

Students' Adjustments to the Transition from Elementary to Secondary School

A. **Short-Term Adjustments for Many Students**
- Getting around the school
- Knowing the expectations
- Developing a routine

B. **Evolving Adjustments for Many Students**
- Making new friends
- Learning in common cohorts
- Doing the work

A number of the students in the case study sites are in schools where classroom-based innovations are still at the planning stage, in the backroom. Students here are either unaware of or do not comment on the proposed changes. Even in schools where destreaming, a core and integrated curriculum or other initiatives are in progress, some students do not express or demonstrate direct concerns about these initiatives. For many of those who do voice an opinion, destreaming and cohort groupings for example, represent a return to a world they had left. They had eagerly looked forward to a secondary school which had more choices, discrete subjects, a rotating schedule, streamed courses, and a new combination of students in each class. Cohorts, destreamed courses, and integrated subjects are not what they had come to expect or want from a secondary school. Students in one case study, though, are pleased with the initiatives taking place in their school and comment positively on the efforts of the administration to involve them in decision-making. Nevertheless, most of the students want the secondary school to make good on its historical promise of difference to offer a clear *rite of passage*.

In smoothing this *rite of passage* and making it less traumatic, some secondary schools may paradoxically be running risks of eliminating it altogether. This is not an argument for returning to the *status quo ante*, but it does point to the need to consult and involve students and hear their voices as part of the continuous process of modification and adjustment which effective change requires, as in the case study cited above. In any event, while the traditional form and fabric of secondary education may create an experience of Grade 9 that is overly fragmented, mini schools and common cohort groups may conversely create experiences of monotony as well as community. Though partial and localized, almost all of our case study data suggest that in reconstructing the Grade 9 experience, and the transition to secondary school which it completes, the right balance has yet to be struck between community and monotony.

Regardless of their awareness of impending or actual changes in classroom practices, most students are protectors of the past. They want to preserve the traditional differences between elementary and secondary schools and the enduring patterns of classroom life with which they are familiar. When school remains predictable, students can adapt quickly to its routines and get on with the more important social transitions in their lives. They resist changes which may disrupt their proven strategies for coping with school, a perspective not unlike some of their teachers. Change is a problem for students as much as it is for their teachers. There are few more persuasive arguments than this for involving *both* groups in the change process.

6. The process of restructuring has little value without appreciation of and commitment to its purpose

The dismay that some teachers express about destreaming points to much broader issues concerning teachers', students' and parents' perceptions of Transition Years initiatives. Many teachers maintain their designated and familiar position as policy takers; as recipients of innovation and, in the disturbing and demeaning terms of military-industrial language, as "targets" for implementation. Under these conditions, it is not surprising that they should await official announcements from government before considering any significant changes. In the meantime, teachers either assume a "this-too-will-pass" stance or adopt a few of those Transition Years components which can most readily be assimilated into current perspectives and practices. Despite expressed frustration and occasional resistance, these teachers begrudgingly accept their role as implementors of policies determined by those elected or appointed to do so.

In the schools where the change agenda is more comprehensive, the Transition Years initiatives are part of a more pervasive and fundamental reform platform. For example, in L'École Secondaire du Sud-Ouest, the initiatives support the linguistic and cultural priorities of Franco-Ontarian education, "le fait francais" and the survival of the francophone community in the area. In Allendale, the initiatives are one aspect of renewing the school and its importance in the community. And at Lincoln, they form part of a comprehensive commitment to radical restructuring in a newly created setting with staff "chosen" for just such a mission. These efforts are less about working harder or even smarter and more about working differently. Here, the teachers find themselves more actively engaged and centrally located in translating and defining policy. Their actions both inform and become policy-in-action as they struggle to take charge of their own destiny. In these emerging professional worlds, these teachers are becoming primary policy makers within their own schools. Change has a purpose for them.

By contrast, in settings far removed from Toronto, the dictates of destreaming in particular can sometimes seem unwanted, unnecessary and unintelligible intrusions on the purposes and priorities of teachers who feel they are more familiar with their own school and its students. Similarly, restructuring can be less rigorous where aspects of it have been adopted as an organizational expedient to support pragmatic changes in buildings and staffing that had to be made anyway. And among parents, we have seen that those who are regularly included in the school and its affairs are those who understand and appreciate the purpose of Transition Years initiatives; while those who are excluded or distanced from their children's schools do not.

What our case studies clearly show is not just the central place of purpose in educational change and restructuring. They also show that responsibility for developing and renewing a sense of purpose does not and perhaps should not fall solely on the shoulders of government, but should also be actively created and sustained by teachers and schools themselves. Those schools in our sample with a clear, well developed and collectively shared sense of purpose were those schools best fitted to take the implementation of Transition Years initiatives from the backroom to the classroom. Developing a clear mission and sense of purpose, that is inclusive of all students in the school (and not just the academically successful), is a necessary context for implementing Transition Years initiatives, and needs to be attended to prior to and during the implementation process itself.

7. Restructuring should involve teachers working collaboratively to effect continuous change themselves

Teachers are the keys to educational change. They can also be the bolts that keep many windows of educational opportunity tightly shut. They can resist changes they do not want, resent ones which have been imposed, and retreat from ones they do not understand. There is no greater paradox of educational restructuring and reform than this. In some respects, teachers are in a strong and arguably the strongest position to evaluate the success, merit and worth of new practices. They have an immediate daily sense of those initiatives that are valuable to do, that should have priority, and that seem feasible under the circumstances of time, resources, and human energy. If practising classroom teachers were more directly involved in policy, they could maintain a running record of practice and consequently, be able to report on the experience, process, and outcomes of change. Teachers' practical knowledge could, in this sense, provide the cornerstone for informed debate about what to improve in classroom and school practices, how to improve these practices, and why these practices need to be improved in particular ways.

The indispensibility of teachers to the change process provides strong grounds for actively involving them in policy-making. Such involvement will also help transform teachers' resistance to and resentment about change, much of which is less concerned with the change itself, than with the change being distant, unclear and imposed upon teachers who have been uninvolved in its development. Securing greater participation among teachers may mean more than involving a representative few who participate in decisions that are then imposed on their colleagues elsewhere. It also means creating models of policy-making at the school or local level which include many teachers in ways that impact on their own workplaces.

Teachers' practical knowledge is a treasure trove of unused insight about the realities of implementation and change. It is *teachers* who work and meet with students consistently and continuously within the classroom. It is *their* judgement that ultimately matters. Theirs is the work that makes the difference. Theirs are the commitments that ultimately need to be secured in terms of what is desirable and practical within their own classrooms. Like it or not, this is why teachers really are at the centre of educational change. And this is why inclusion of their voices in making, interpreting and implementing change is absolutely vital.

8. The partnerships that form the base of restructuring need to extend beyond teachers to students and parents as well

Our case study evidence indicates that in all pilot projects but one, teachers still need to work much more closely and effectively with their students as junior partners in the change process. As yet, most students seem to be little more than beneficiaries of change. They play little or no part with their teachers as co-protagonists. By actively participating in the change process, however, students could learn and influence how their classroom interactions could and should develop. If teachers could negotiate a different working relationship with students, this would simultaneously exemplify and stimulate further reform. In most schools, and not just in these cases, student involvement in innovation is undervalued and underused (Rudduck, 1991). When teachers develop alternative systems of student evaluation, they seem more ready to devise complex and extensive procedures to make yet more judgements about students than to involve students in making and sharing these judgements themselves. Students are objects of rather than participants in evaluation. Teachers also seem more ready to *inform* students about innovation, sometimes in a rather cursory, one-shot fashion, than to involve students in decisions about what form the innovation should take, or how it might be altered. There is much that teachers and schools can do to involve their students more as partners in learning and change, and a great deal to be gained by doing so, as one of our cases has clearly shown.

Students are not the only group to whom teachers need to extend the hand of partnership. Teachers also need to create a more secure and interdependent base of accountability to parents and the wider public (Thiessen and Pike, 1992). In addition to establishing more reciprocal bonds among themselves within the educational community (professional accountability), teachers need to establish more cooperative associations with students and parents (moral accountability). Yet our chapter on parents' views and understandings of Transition Years initiatives, and indeed of the extent to which secondary schools communicate clear and meaningful assessments to parents about their children's progress, reveals that great strides have yet to be taken on the road to parental involvement. However, as data from one of the schools in that chapter show, while improved information does not guarantee ideological conversion, the school which had established strong relationships with parents and meaningful forms of reporting about their children's progress, was the school where parents were most knowledgeable about and supportive of the Transition Years' initiatives. Similar patterns can be seen in the case study report of L'École Secondaire du Sud-Ouest.

Were teachers able and willing to establish a secure base of moral and professional accountability to students and parents, they might then be in a stronger, more credible position to inform and make recommendations to school boards and the Ministry of Education and Training (contractual accountability) and to interact with the concerns and interests of parties outside of the education system (social accountability). By reaching out to and interconnecting with these various groups, teachers could become more accountable with — not to or for — those who have a legitimate role in how education changes (Morgan, K. and Morgan, G., 1992).

Forecasting future directions is well beyond what can reasonably be learned from the case studies and likely unimportant to particular Transition Years initiatives confined to the corridors and backrooms of secondary school life. However, if the Transition Years initiatives are the beginnings of a more fundamental shift in schooling, then these last challenges are very much a part of the years of transition that lie ahead. If teachers were able and permitted to embrace such partnerships and patterns of accountability, they would no longer be in the rearguard of change (as conventional models of implementation often see them), but at the vanguard, creating partnerships with students, critically examining different practices together, and sharing responsibility for reform with a wider network of stakeholders.

Teachers' voices are vital to the change process. But teachers' voices are not necessarily more authentic than any other voices. It is important not to become overly romantic about teachers' words and teachers' worlds here. Teachers are not infallible, or impregnable. Their insights are important but not inherently superior to anyone else's. As we have seen, no one has a monopoly on experiencing or understanding the realities of restructuring. These realities are necessarily different for teachers, students and parents. It matters that all such realities are recognized and also reconciled through continued communication between the different groups, in formal and less formal ways.

9. Restructuring requires not only commitment to collaboration. It requires creating workplace conditions which make it meaningful and possible.

While teachers' voices are important, they convey nothing in a vacuum. They originate and reverberate within particular structures of thinking and working; structures often better suited to other purposes and other times. To some extent these structures contain and constrain what teachers know, experience and can imagine. For example, reports that teachers' early understandings of destreaming were of three or four sub-streams being taught together in one class, can be interpreted in these terms. Only when they worked with destreaming, experienced it, developed it, and modified it did more sophisticated understandings of its meaning emerge. In their recent study of *Secondary School Work Cultures and Educational Change*, Hargreaves and colleagues (1992) found that without direct experience of or access to destreamed classes, teachers' conceptions of what destreaming would look like were grounded in anachronistic experiences in their own professional biographies, such as one-room schoolhouses, or elementary school classrooms in the 1960s. Within these particular contexts, what passed for *practical* knowledge was in many ways deeply *impractical*. It served teachers poorly in understanding the unfamiliar changes with which they were being confronted.

The press for restructuring to loosen teachers' existing assumptions about secondary school teaching and to create alternative images and experiences of what else might be possible, in terms of real examples of destreaming, integration, cross-panel teaching and the like therefore seems eminently sensible. Restructuring in the sense we have defined it is not about imposing new systems of curriculum, evaluation, or student organization on their own. This is actually systemic reform. Rather, restructuring involves building new patterns of communication and new relationships of power among those most centrally involved in and affected by the practice of education (particularly administrators, teachers, students and parents). In this sense, its purpose is not to control teachers by imposing system-wide demands for testing, programming and the like, but to create new conditions, new ground rules for teachers, in more active partnership with parents, students and each other, to make the necessary improvements in education themselves on a continuing basis. What is being restructured, in this view, are the conditions of teachers' workplaces to create more collaborative communities where teachers will be more able to make important changes that they will come to perceive as necessary and to which they will remain committed. The norm of the isolated teacher, alone and always "on" with their class, teaching separate subjects in 60-70 minute time blocks must change. If it does not, efforts at integration will be defeated by the timetable and destreaming will be reduced to what individual teachers can manage alone with successive subject classes.

The pilot project cases we have reviewed here have illustrated some productive examples of school restructuring which empower teachers, individually and together, to improve what they do in fundamental ways. There is much to be learned from the successes of these cases, and just as much from their mistakes. More important still, are the omissions that need to be addressed in most of these cases in terms of closer partnership with parents, and more meaningful involvement of students in innovation, change, and the learning process as a whole.

Summary

Stronger, more collaborative cultures of teaching throughout the transition years are essential to meaningful, productive and sustained improvement. There are some real signs of the emergence among Transition Years teachers of what Fullan & Hargreaves (1991) call *interactive professionalism.* Yet, if it is confined to teachers only, interactive professionalism can become incestuous professionalism. We have seen that collaborative cultures of teaching need to engage with and be more inclusive of student cultures and parent cultures as well. *Restructuring* is showing signs of creating the long-term conditions in which such cultures of improvement can grow and prosper. It is a kick-start to get the engine of continuous educational improvement working. Extending the experience of restructuring through continuous experimentation, continued support, added encouragement and modest pressure, offers the best hopes for moving innovation from the corridors and backrooms to the classrooms and communities of our schools – particularly in view of the relatively generous timescales that effective implementation has been shown to require (Miles and Huberman, 1984). By contrast, impatient impositions of restructuring may create some semblance of change in the corridors and backrooms, in the programs and policies for schooling in the Transition Years, but without the understanding, commitment and developed capacity of Transition Years teachers, they will have few or no beneficial effects on how teachers teach and how students learn in the classroom.

Implications

The most sound, sensible and sensitive implications of our case studies will be those implications that teachers and others can draw for themselves. However, a small number stand out to us as being so striking and significant that they need separate identification. We have given more than a hint of these already. We offer them not stridently, as firm recommendations, but tentatively, as a basis for conversation and reflection with our readers.

Change Substance

- Destreaming is just one fragment in the mosaic that makes up Transition Years restructuring. It is an integral part of that mosaic, but not an exceptional one. Its relative importance can easily be exaggerated, particularly when it is noted that in almost all other Canadian provinces, secondary school and its differentiated course structures does not commence until Grade 10.

- Destreaming means more than teaching to a lowered middle, modifying courses down, or teaching three or four substreams within one class. Teachers who have come to appreciate this are teachers who have had actual contact with destreaming, experienced it, struggled with it, and modified it as they learned through practice what it implies. In the end, the only way to develop a more sophisticated understanding of destreaming is to see it and to do it.

- In most, though not all of the cases we studied, Transition Years initiatives mostly involved Grade 9 students, teachers and parents. The initiatives overall however, extend far beyond this point to encompass the concerns of Grades 7 and 8 in elementary school also. However, in those cases which did focus explicitly on facilitating transition between Grades 7, 8, and 9, promising developments were evident in cross-panel teaching, discussion and the like. It is important to build on these strengths elsewhere and not to assume that the Transition Years is predominantly or exclusively a Grade 9 issue.

- The gravitational pull of subject departments that are deeply embedded in historical tradition, parents' assumptions and teachers' careers and identities, makes it hard for individual secondary schools to succeed at curriculum integration and to maintain that success. Teachers working in particular grades within individual schools at the secondary level are unlikely to have sufficient strength to resist these gravitational effects within their own settings. If integration is to be ensured rather than merely encouraged, it may require legislative force to create the frameworks in which teachers feel able to act.

- Mini-schools, sub-schools and cohort systems for Grade 9 create real possibilities for community and seem to be successful in combatting the inpersonality and fragmentation that secondary schools can otherwise create for their students. At the same time, many students see these arrangements as condemning them to repeating Grade 8, removing from them the opportunities for greater choice and wider contacts, and denying them the proper *rite of passage* which they expected secondary schools to provide. On the basis of our evidence, efforts at restructuring Grade 9 have yet to strike the right balance between *community* and *monotony*. The challenge here is to create an experience of Grade 9 that is sufficiently common, caring and inclusive so as to counter the traditional problems of fragmentation and impersonality of secondary schooling, while incorporating enough elements of choice and diversity, and enough changes in program and instruction, to convey to students a substantial sense of progression from Grade 8.

- Students are more often objects of rather than partners in evaluation. Efforts at alternative evaluation have sometimes turned into processes of unending judgement – ones which continue to exclude students from decisions about the learning process. Much has yet to be achieved in terms of involving students more widely in self-evaluation, and indirectly, therefore, in evaluating their programs as well. Specific inservice efforts to raise awareness of and expertise in student self-evaluation and in the review of programs between teachers and students, would be valuable here. Where alternative evaluation and reporting systems are used, student and parent voices articulate a need for clear standards, benchmarks or criteria to be identified which give anecdotal comments and complex ratings of student skills a clear and explicit context for interpretation.

Change Purpose

- Schools where teachers have a clear and common sense of purpose are schools where progress in implementing Transition Years' initiatives is most advanced. Teachers cannot be given purpose. They can only develop purpose themselves. The responsibility for developing and reviewing such senses of purpose must at least in part be initiated and internalized by teachers themselves as an ongoing commitment, rather than expecting purposes to be enunciated with unambiguous explicitness in the papers and policies of government.

Change Process

- Restructuring is progressing well in the backrooms and corridors of Transition Years schools. In most of our case studies, however, it is making less inroads into their classrooms and communities. This should not be regarded as a failure of implementation. In situations of complex change, staffroom planning necessarily precedes classroom practice. The goal of extending implementation into classrooms and communities in the long-term, however, should not be neglected or displaced, and the necessary resources, attention and support should be provided to ensure that this goal is reached beyond the early years of pilot project experimentation.

- Restructuring is ultimately about reconstructing relationships of communication and power within and around our schools in order to create better learning for students on a continuous basis. More collaborative working relations among teachers were widely established in the pilot project case study schools and had positive implications for the implementation of Transition Years components. Inclusion of parents in the development of policy and change had similarly positive effects but was less common. Including students in innovation was the rarest practice of all, but in the one case where we saw it, had highly positive consequences for building student commitment and creating teacher learning. Pilot project schools appear to be taking promising steps in terms of building more collaborative communities among teachers within schools and, less frequently across panels. The inclusion of parents and students in the process of development and change, however, remains relatively elusive and deserves greater prominence in the change agenda.

- Teachers are integral to educational change but also, often, its obstacles. Existing structures of department, division and delivery create more obstacles to change than opportunities for it. Restructuring constructs new opportunities and ground rules for teachers to work together across conventional dividing lines in order to harness the collective capacities for learning and change. In this sense, the most important thing about curricular integration is not that it breaks down philosophical walls, but that it builds new relationships among teachers. It brings together people more than materials. Restructuring, in this sense, is about creating the changed conditions for teachers to commit to change themselves as a community, on a continuous basis, in the interests of students they come to know best.

Endnote

These case studies have shown that there are many realities of teaching and learning in the Transition Years at the elementary as well as at the secondary level. Indeed, a challenge for the future is to bring these different realities together in more inclusive communities of learning and growth. But where change is concerned, the overriding reality of all is that meaningful change that matters in the classroom takes patience, time and support. The pilot project case studies indicate some promising beginnings. But while the pilot projects are ending, the profound change that we call school restructuring has really just commenced. We therefore conclude our case study report with a satisfying sense of early success, yet also with a sober awareness of the daunting challenges that still remain of extending this success into more classrooms within the pilot projects, and into more schools beyond them.

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